

The Nation and The Athenæum

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CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
EVENTS OF THE WEEK	231	Biography	250
THE FINANCIAL PROBLEM OF FRANCE	234	Able Seamen	252
CHINA: A TASK FOR THE LEAGUE?	235	A Romance of Politics	254
WHAT IS TRUTH? A POLITICAL INQUISITION IN THE MANNER OF MRS. MARKHAM. By Frank A. Clement	237	Poetry	254
LIFE AND POLITICS. By Kappa	237	The Article and the Essay	256
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Armistice Day Celebrations (Arthur J. Cummings); The Food Council and the Bakers (John Kirkland); Colonel Olcott and Theosophy (Basil P. Howell); Sir Edward Grey (Chas. Wright); Red Hazards (G. Grant Morris)	239	FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA. By Omicron	259
NOTES ON LAW AND ORDER.—II. THE REVOLT AGAINST REASON. By J. A. Hobson	241	THE WORLD OF BOOKS:— Charlotte Brontë. By Leonard Woolf	260
SCIENCE:— Freud and His Critics.—II. By James Glover	242	REVIEWS:— Stead. By J. W. Robertson Scott	261
AUTUMN LITERARY SUPPLEMENT:— Napoleon. By John Beresford	245	Statistics and Hysterics	261
A Batch of Plays. By Bonamy Dobrée	246	Fiction. By Edwin Muir	262
Saint Samuel of Fleet Street	248	British Drama	264
Culture for the Multitude	248	Christianity and Modern Psychology	264
		London	266
		Modern Japanese Drama	266
		ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE	268
		NOVELS IN BRIEF	268
		BOOKS IN BRIEF	268
		FINANCIAL SECTION:— The Week in the City	270

All communications (accompanied by a stamped envelope for return) should be addressed to the Editor THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM, 38, Great James Street, W.C.1.

EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE distinctive feature of this year's Lord Mayor's Banquet was the reception accorded to the German Ambassador, who was loudly cheered as he entered the dining-hall and cheered again as he took the loving-cup from Mr. Austen Chamberlain. A big change, one may say, in seven years of peace, but a still more remarkable change from the relations of two years and even one year ago. Mr. Chamberlain had every right to speak with pride and hope of the achievement at Locarno, and the tone and temper of his observations were alike admirable. There was something a little pathetic perhaps in the Prime Minister's attempt to maintain the same sanguine and cordial tone with respect to industrial prospects at home. No one can doubt the sincerity of Mr. Baldwin's professions, but the activities, in different directions, of Mr. Churchill and Sir William Joynson-Hicks have so changed the atmosphere, and Mr. Baldwin is so obviously embarrassed by his colleagues, that the appeals for team-work and for peace in industry now have the ring of a despairing adhesion to principle instead of the confident hope with which they were first put forward.

Sir Douglas Hogg devoted his speech at the Guildhall to a defence of the Public Prosecutor's action in withdrawing the charge of larceny brought against the Fascists who seized a DAILY HERALD van. The Attorney-General stated emphatically that there had been no Cabinet consideration or decision with regard to this case, and that there were no instructions directly or indirectly given to the Public Prosecutor. This seems a water-tight declaration, and indeed, if it were not for the political aspect of the case—if the silly offenders had not proclaimed their preposterous motives—no one would have suspected Ministers of intervening. The unfortunate thing is that we have got into an atmosphere in which everyone is on the look-out for Communist or Fascist plots, and the Government has not kept itself free from bias in the matter. Nobody believes that if at the pre-

sent time a party of Communists were to seize a MORNING POST van, with the avowed object of delaying the circulation of that estimable journal, they would get off with a reprimand from a magistrate. Six months ago they might have done so, but not to-day. The change is largely the product of the Home Secretary's speeches, and the miserable result is that an act of clemency towards four young fools is regarded with grave suspicion by all who value impartial justice.

The House of Commons reassembles on Monday, and a full-dress debate on Locarno is promised on Wednesday. The Government hope to pass a large number of Bills, including the Criminal Justice Bill, the Rating and Valuation Bill, and the Legitimacy Bill, in the few weeks available before Christmas. They will also have to get through a Supplementary Estimate for the Coal Subsidy, which is certain to exceed the £10 millions voted, before the House reassembles in February; and they are also credited with the intention of introducing a Supplementary Finance Bill to "safeguard" those industries which have passed the barrage of the Board of Trade Committees. When due allowance is made for the inevitable debates on O.M.S., the Public Prosecutor and the DAILY HERALD case, and other topics which the Liberal and Labour Parties are bound to raise, it looks as though this belated Autumn Session will be a busy one.

The Reports of the Safeguarding Committees have not yet been published, because dumping in the industries which have qualified for protection is feared. It is generally assumed, however, that Gloves and Gas Mantles have won their case, while the fate of Aluminium Hollow-ware and Wrapping and Packing Paper remains in doubt. The claims of Dress Fabrics (the West Riding Worsted Industry), Brushes, and Cutlery are still under consideration, but it is possible that some of these Committees will be hurried to a conclusion in order that their verdicts, if favourable, may be included in the

forthcoming Bill. Meanwhile, one danger inherent in this policy of peddling with Protection is illustrated by a German protest. A delegation from the German Government has been in London this week to interview representatives of the Treasury and the Board of Trade on the subject of the British-German Trade Treaty which was signed last December. This Treaty is based on the most-favoured-nation principle, and specifically provides that both parties, "while retaining their right to take appropriate measures to preserve their own industries," undertake "to abstain from using their respective Customs tariffs or any other charges as a means of discrimination against the trade of the other." In view of the fact that German competition is often the main ground upon which an import duty is claimed under the Safeguarding Regulations, it is not unnatural that the Germans should regard this clause as imperilled. When they signed the Treaty, they point out, Britain was a Free Trade country.

At the moment of going to press the political situation in France is as confused as it could well be. M. Painlevé's financial measures were reduced to such chaos in the Finance Committee that the Government has decided to recast the Bill, and submit it *de novo*. Meanwhile, the various groups of the Cartel des Gauches appear to have arrived at a common understanding as to the lines on which financial policy should be shaped. Their argument comprises the latest variant which the capital levy project has assumed, namely, the assignment to the State of a percentage of the shares of all industrial and commercial companies—a proposal which was rejected by the Finance Committee earlier in the week. It is far from clear whether M. Painlevé will be able to carry on, or whether he will go the way of M. Caillaux.

Marshal Pétain has stated officially that "military action" in Morocco "is now over," and that he is handing the situation on to M. Steeg, the new Resident-General. On the Spanish side, General Primo de Rivera has stated, in reply to Señor Cambon, who urged evacuation of the Spanish zone and the renunciation of the Protectorate, that "tangible and satisfactory events will demonstrate that the Directory has found a sensible solution for Morocco." These two statements can only mean that the French and Spanish Governments contemplate reopening negotiations with Abd-el-Krim; it will be interesting to see whether their proposals differ, materially, from the very vague formulae current during the summer. Their military position has certainly been improved by the autumn offensive; but it is still exceedingly weak in places, and they would be well advised not to drive Abd-el-Krim to another campaign. It must be added that the news which is beginning to filter through from Syria is not likely to facilitate negotiations between the French and a Moslem people.

A rather baffling silence has fallen upon the political conflict in Germany, and a number of party conferences are being hastily convened to pass resolutions on policy before the Reichstag reassembles on November 19th. The Socialist Party conference—perhaps the most interesting and important of them all—has been sitting for several days; but no details of its proceedings have been divulged. So far as can be judged, in the meantime, from the party newspapers, there seems no reason

to doubt that the Locarno Pact will be ratified by the votes of the Socialists, the Democrats, and the Centre parties. The editor of *GERMANIA*, the leading organ of the Liberals, expressed the general feeling fairly well when he wrote that the Nationalists are quite wrong in assuming that the Locarno Pact will be useless to Europe unless they support it. The rebuff which the monarchist movement in Bavaria has recently received may probably be regarded as a repercussion of the disgust which the Nationalist tactics have aroused among moderate men of all parties; and this is strikingly illustrated by the publication of a manifesto signed by influential Conservatives in support of the Pact.

Details of the plot to murder Signor Mussolini have been obscured, first by an extraordinary outcrop of the wildest rumours, and secondly by a rigid censorship. Police inquiries continue; meanwhile the Government has ordered the dissolution of the Unitary Socialist Party, the occupation by troops of all Masonic Lodges, and the suppression of several newspapers and Labour organizations. In consideration of these steps, and in order that the Fascist Party may insist on further repressive measures, Signor Farinacci has prohibited individual reprisals. It is a biting commentary on the Fascist régime that such prohibition should be necessary. All believers in constitutional government will condemn the attempt on Signor Mussolini as strongly as they condemned the murder of Signor Matteotti and the recent outrages in Florence. There will never be peace in Italy until political assassination and violence are recognized as wicked and futile by whomsoever and against whomsoever they are employed.

Whether the Prime Minister was or was not unduly optimistic in his general survey at the Guildhall, he was undoubtedly sanguine in the passage on the affairs of India. His reference to the results achieved by Lord Reading's administration was, we are glad to think, justified, but the same thing cannot be said of Mr. Baldwin's comment on the outlook in the Legislative Assembly. The recent session, he said, had "furnished welcome evidence of the growth of the spirit of responsibility" and of a conception of Parliamentary *esprit de corps*, while the new Indian Speaker had "explained the duties of his office in language which would not have been unworthy of the late Lord Peel or Lord Ullswater." It is true that Mr. Patel's inaugural address from the chair of the Assembly was, as we noted at the time, a striking statement in favour of co-operation; but, unfortunately, it did not usher in a plan of co-operation. The early-autumn session at Simla was in the main unfruitful, and a few days only before Mr. Baldwin spoke at the Guildhall, the Swarajist leader, Mr. Motilal Nehru, announced that the coming session at Delhi was to be marked by a renewal of obstructive tactics. The Swaraj Party, said Mr. Nehru, could not give the co-operation for which Lord Reading and Lord Birkenhead had appealed. The Prime Minister has now renewed the appeal, in tones to which the more moderate Indians in the Assembly cannot fail to respond. But it must be recognized that the official attitude of the Swaraj Party does not bear out Mr. Baldwin's description.

The Chinese Tariff Conference is proceeding with its discussions to the regrettable accompaniment of a renewed outbreak of civil war. In the Conference itself

the detailed examination of the alternative Chinese, Japanese, and American schemes is being held over, pending a more definite formulation of the Chinese plan for the abolition of *likin*. This plan is to be presented next week; but the real difficulty lies in the inability of the Central Government to enforce the abolition of *likin* unless some alternative source of provincial revenues, acceptable to the *Tuchuns*, can be discovered. Meanwhile, despite the approach of winter, a three-cornered struggle seems likely to break out between Wei Pei-Fu, Chang Tso-Lin and Feng Yu-Hsiang for the control of Peking—a struggle no doubt stimulated by the possibility of an increased Customs revenue to the capital. Both the course of the Conference discussions, and the events which are taking place outside, confirm our belief that a much more drastic measure of financial reform will be necessary if tariff autonomy is really to ameliorate Chinese conditions, and that the relations between Peking, the Powers, and the Provinces will yet demand consideration from a higher authority than the Conference.

* * *

Last week the Miners' Federation failed to obtain a "satisfactory" reply from the Minister of Labour to their appeal for a rehearing of certain cases in which unemployment benefit has been refused on the ground that the men were resisting reductions in basis rates, and were therefore engaged in a trade dispute. The Minister pointed out that he had no power to interfere with the decisions of the *Umpire*, and he might have added that in the existing state of the law the *Umpire* could not reverse his decision even if a rehearing was granted. At the same time there is much to be said for the miners' contention, that owing to the peculiar methods of wage determination in their industry the present unemployment insurance regulations produce anomalous results. The gist of the matter is that in most industries there are agreed district rates of wages, and if one employer in the district locks out his workmen in an endeavour to force them to accept a lower rate, the workmen are entitled to unemployment benefit. In the coal-mining industry, however, the variations in physical conditions between the different pits in any district, and even between different seams in the same pit, make any system of uniform district rates impossible: hence the adoption of the numerous price-lists which constitute the basis rates, and the application to these varying rates of a uniform district percentage varying with the state of trade.

* * *

There is therefore no customary basis rate in the coal-mining industry, and miners who are locked out for refusing to accept a reduction are deemed to be engaged in an ordinary trade dispute and are not entitled to unemployment benefit. The miners are only entitled to benefit if their employer reduces the district percentage addition to the basis rates, though the effective rate of wages may be reduced in either way. This problem has not developed before now, because in normal times the alternative to a reduction of basis rates is not the closing down of the pit, and therefore sooner or later agreement is reached. On the other hand, it would clearly be undesirable to pay benefit in all cases where the men refuse a reduction—the deciding factor should be whether wages are reduced below the customary general level of remuneration in the district. There is a real problem here which needs serious consideration, and the new Inquiry

Committee into the Insurance Acts should give the miners a hearing. Fortunately one member of the committee at least has an intimate knowledge of the very confusing methods of wage determination in the coal-mining industry.

* * *

In writing a paragraph last week, on the inadequate remuneration of our Prime Ministers, our contributor "Kappa" used a phrase about Mr. Lloyd George's journalistic work which was unfortunately ambiguous. We are sorry that there should have been any misunderstanding on the point, and trust that this will be completely removed by "Kappa's" explanation in his own columns. We should like, however, to take this opportunity of observing that we have never regarded the candid expression of British views, or the frank discussion of our difficulties, in America, by Mr. Lloyd George or anyone else, as inimical to the interests of this country. It is well to be sensitive to the opinion of other peoples; but we do not believe that harm is ever done in the long run if others see us as we see ourselves.

* * *

The National Liberal Inquiry organized by the Council of the Liberal Summer Schools is proving a great success. The questionnaires are being closely studied by hundreds of participating associations and the keenest interest is stimulated. The questionnaire for October dealt, as we have already recorded, with the Drink Problem. This month "Liberalism and Trade Unionism" is the selected subject, and in view of this and of the important issues raised by recent Trade Union activities and the Conservative threat to abolish the "political levy," we shall deal with the topic in our leading article next week. Meanwhile, Mr. Baldwin's reply to Mr. Macquisten's threatening letter is promised and is awaited with interest, but has not been published at the time when we go to press.

* * *

The trade depression has accentuated a paradox of middle-class housing which had been observable for some time past. In most of our great cities there are now houses in considerable number which have stood empty for quite a long time. Exigencies of business or of profession have compelled the owners to move to another city. There they would like to rent, but cannot do so. Nor can they buy so long as the old house is on their hands. If they could sell they could afford to buy; or if they could rent they could afford to let. They could let their own houses easily enough at a high rent, but they will not part with them until they are themselves rehoused. Mr. Brown, who has moved from Newcastle to London, dare not let his Newcastle house until he can rent in London; Mr. Smith, who has moved from London to Newcastle, is in exactly the same position. Neither of them is willing to sell at a price which can be speedily obtained, because he is clinging desperately to the hope of recovering almost the whole of the capital (usually mostly borrowed) which he sank a few years ago. It is an absurd position, and if they could meet they could probably come quite easily to some mutually agreeable proposition. In exceptional cases, by advertisement or by sheer luck, this may happen. But the odds are against it. The house agents give very little help; it is out of their routine, and it appears more profitable to wait for an enforced sale sooner or later. But an enterprising firm which would specialize in bringing the Browns and Smiths together might do very well out of it as well as render a much-needed social service.

THE FINANCIAL PROBLEM OF FRANCE

FRANCE has become increasingly liable of late to financial crises acute enough to sweep Governments away. A state of financial crisis, dominating the political scene, seems now to have become endemic; and it is not easy to place limits to the number of Cabinets which it is likely to overturn. It is worth the while of all of us to make a real effort to understand the situation. The financial straits of France have been a governing factor in the politics of Europe in recent years; they may be so again. Moreover, as another illustration on the grand scale of the basic principles of currency and finance, the whole position is exceedingly instructive. If we are to understand it, we must not assume that it is adequately summed up in the easy maxims in which it is natural for us to indulge.

The following is a fair paraphrase of most British commentaries on the plight of France: "France has her remedy in her own hands. She must face the necessity of taxing herself adequately, cutting down expenditure, and really balancing her budget. Then all will be well, for France is a prosperous country, with a hopeful economic future. But so long as she puts off the evil day, each section of Frenchmen insisting that the necessary taxes must be paid by someone else, so long will the franc continue to disintegrate, and the financial situation go from bad to worse. The choice is between drastic taxation on the one hand, and inflation on the other; and if France wishes to avoid the awful consequences of the latter course, she must brace herself to endure the rigours of the former."

In all this, there is of course a large measure of truth—truth which badly needed saying two or three years ago. An unbalanced budget is undoubtedly the root of the trouble; the balancing of the budget an indispensable condition of stability. But this is by no means the whole truth; nor is it the part of the truth which Frenchmen nowadays are most prone to ignore, and which, therefore, it is most helpful to emphasize. The task of balancing the French budget is, indeed, not so easy as comments of the above class assume; and we do not believe that the most heroic fiscal measures that are practicable can provide a complete solution. The essence of the present situation, as we see it, can be expressed as follows. The real choice before France is the choice between further inflation on the one hand and repudiation on the other. The unpleasant necessity which French opinion most needs to recognize to-day is the necessity of further inflation, entailing a further rise in "*la vie chère*," if the more objectionable course of repudiation is to be avoided. The great problem to which the French financial authorities need to address themselves, and which will call for all the skill and resource of which they are capable, is the problem of protecting the franc against any further *external* depreciation while the inevitable *internal* depreciation is going on, and retaining in some degree the confidence of the French investor.

Perhaps the simplest way in which the average British reader can obtain a fair perspective of the French financial situation is by reading "*The French Debt Problem*,"* by Harold J. Moulton and Cleona Lewis, one of the latest of the invaluable studies issued by the American "*Institute of Economics*." After a careful and severe scrutiny of French official statistics, these writers come to the conclusion that, so far from the

Budget being already within sight of equilibrium, there was really a deficit on the year 1924 of fully 16 milliard francs, and that the current financial year is likely to make an equally bad showing. Sixteen milliard francs is about half the total revenue. It is equivalent, with the franc at 120, to over £130 millions—and to a much larger sum on the basis of the present *internal* value of the franc. Obviously, this is an enormous deficit; and, after surveying the possibilities of bridging it by orthodox means, Mr. Moulton and his colleague are not hopeful. Part of the deficit is accounted for by reconstruction expenditure still to be undertaken in the devastated areas. This might possibly be suspended, and in any case it can be regarded more or less legitimately as a capital item, rather than as a recurring element in the Budget. But by no means all the expenditure which is classed as reconstruction is of this type; charges for pensions, &c., which are recurrent items, are still included in the reconstruction accounts, to the confusion of official statistics; and, after assuming the complete cessation of fresh reconstruction expenditure, and allowing for consequential reactions, our authors estimate that a deficit of some 12 milliard francs remains to be dealt with. They see no prospect of squeezing more than a couple of milliards out of military and other retrenchment. Nor, in their opinion, does increased taxation offer a more fertile field. They make some cogent criticisms of the notion of a capital levy on a sufficiently productive scale. They argue that, contrary to the impression current among Anglo-Saxons, the French taxpayer is already as heavily taxed as any, and cannot shoulder a much heavier burden. Here they are not so convincing as elsewhere, though from the standpoint of what is practical politics in France, their conclusion is no doubt right enough.

So gloomy is the impression which these American investigators have formed, that they recommend as an essential policy "an arbitrary reduction of the interest payable on the entire internal debt to a flat rate of 2 per cent." Such a step, combined with the cessation of reconstruction, with retrenchment, and "a special surtax on high incomes," would, they estimate, enable the Government to make ends meet; but not much more. Obviously, this is an exceedingly drastic remedy. It is repudiation in its most naked form. Its propounders defend it on the plea of absolute necessity:—

"The plan simply recognizes that the people's corporation known as the French Government is unable to meet its obligations in full, and that accordingly the people must for the time being accept smaller dividends, so to speak."

It is a measure of the seriousness of the French position that such a course should be advocated in so responsible and dispassionate a work. Nor is this policy without influential French supporters. Behind the scenes, rather than on the stage, it plays an increasingly prominent part in the wrangles and speculations of party groups. It is sufficiently recognized as a serious possibility to be an important factor in the rapid growth of distrust on the part of the investor.

For our part, however, we do not believe that so desperate a remedy is necessary. The burden of the debt charges on the Budget can be lightened in another way, namely by a general rise in the level of prices and money-incomes. For, as prices rise, the revenue, measured in money, rises in rough proportion, while on the expenditure side the huge item of debt charges is unaffected, except in so far—a most important proviso—as new bor-

*The Macmillan Co., New York.

rowings are necessary and become more costly. Thus, subject to this proviso, each fresh depreciation of the franc eases the Budget position. If the franc remains at 120-125 to the £, and the French price-level becomes adjusted thereto, there should not remain, in our judgment, any insuperable difficulty in balancing the Budget. It can be argued, of course, that inflation means disguised repudiation, and that the holder of French *rentes* might as well submit to the more straightforward variety. But this is not entirely true. Subscribers to Government loans are not singled out as the sole victims of inflation. It is more accurate to describe inflation as a disguised capital levy, which is unquestionably a more equitable device than repudiation. As regards the general expediency of such a development, it must be remembered that the present disparity between the internal and the external value of the franc cannot persist indefinitely, and that about as much hardship and confusion would be caused by forcing back the exchange to a figure of 80 or so, as by allowing internal prices to adjust themselves to the exchange. Finally—the consideration that is really decisive—the former result would be most unlikely, even if repudiation were adopted. A measure of fresh inflation will certainly take place; and we have no doubt, therefore, that the true objective of French policy should be to maintain the exchange firmly at about its present level; to go all out to make it clear that an exchange of about 125 will represent the permanent post-war value of the franc.

Disillusionment and distrust are now so widespread in France that the successful pursuit of such a policy is not easy. None the less it ought not to be impossible to carry through, on one condition, namely, that France is willing to use for the purpose her vast gold reserves, which are of no use to her at all, *unless* she is willing to use them in an emergency. The long-period problem of balancing the Budget on the basis of a franc at 120 is quite manageable, given a sufficient breathing-space for the adjustment of prices and the restoration of confidence. And, inasmuch as the Bank of France has gold reserves worth about half the present value of the total note-issue, and equivalent to about ten Morgan loans, it is certainly within her power to secure a very long breathing-space indeed. The best way of giving effect to such a policy might be to revert formally to the gold standard, with the franc devalued to 20 (pre-war) centimes. If such a step were taken, and the Bank of France showed itself ready to part with gold quite freely, the "flight from the franc" would be stayed, the reluctance of the French investor to subscribe to fresh loans on reasonable terms would disappear, and the problem of dealing with the short-term debt, as it falls due for renewal, would lose half its terrors.

But it is not along these lines that French minds are working. France is far less unwilling to tax herself than to risk losing her gold in any emergency whatever. With everyone it is a dogma that fresh inflation must at all costs be avoided, and as everyone knows that in practice it cannot be avoided, such insistence can only result in further shifts and subterfuges which will inspire no confidence whatever. For the rest, attention is occupied with proposals to establish a sinking-fund—in other words, to imitate the most grotesquely foolish feature of the financial policy of Pitt—and with wrangles about the details of fiscal policy, which are remote from the central issue. It is always possible, therefore, that matters will be allowed to drift until the franc undergoes a real *dégringolade*. Certainly, as we have hinted, several more Governments are destined to fall before the French finances are set in order.

CHINA: A TASK FOR THE LEAGUE?

IT is probable that the Chinese Tariff Conference will reach some measure of agreement; for all parties have strong motives for avoiding an open rupture. Whether the Conference is, in itself, capable of providing a real solution of the problem before it, is another question.

One thing is clear: any genuine solution of the fiscal and political questions arising from the relations between China and the Powers must take full account of the relations between the Central Government and the Provinces. Exactly how far the fiscal and administrative system of the Empire has been altered, in outward form, by the laws of the Republic is a question on which even the highest authorities hesitate to pronounce; in fundamentals the change has, inevitably, been small. Any further change must, as inevitably, be slow and gradual; the immense size and population of China, the vast distances between Peking and the provincial centres, and the multiplicity of dialects, forbid any such swift transition from an Eastern to a Western form of government as has taken place in Japan.

The relation between Peking and the provinces was never that of a centralized Western Government to the outlying members of the State. The provinces were always satrapies, governed by a Viceroy, a Manchu General, and a Civil Governor, assisted by a Provincial Treasurer, a Salt Controller, a Grain Intendent, and other officials. Within the province a hierarchy of subordinate officials were responsible for the Tao, or circuit; the Fu, or district, and the Hsien, or township. These provincial and local officials were responsible for every civil and administrative duty that could arise within the limits of their jurisdiction. They were guardians of public order, repairers of roads and public monuments, civil and criminal judges; they imposed and collected taxes. Each had a Yamen, or office, a secretariat, and a number of experts. Their duties towards Peking were confined to giving effect to imperial edicts, most frequently of a religious character, and forwarding, from the surplus remaining after meeting local expenditure, the revenue at which the province was assessed. Thus they enjoyed an almost complete local autonomy, limited only by the fact that all appointments were made from Peking, and few officials remained in the same post for three years at a time.

The revenue sent to Peking was not, even in principle, a sum corresponding to the revenue of a centralized Western Government. The Court and Cabinet at Peking was a supervisory body only; its expenses were confined to maintaining the imperial palaces and temples, and the "boards," which have a rough resemblance to the Ministries of a European State, but were mainly advisory in their functions.

It was contact with the West that forced upon China the conception of a Central Government with financial and international responsibilities of its own. It was an amazement to the Imperial dignitaries that Western Powers should send an envoy to Peking to settle a trading question that arose in Kwangtung, or seek reparations from Peking for the acts of a distant Viceroy, long since deposed and beheaded. It was when indemnities were imposed upon the Central Government by the Western Powers, and loans contracted to pay them, that an enlargement of the imperial revenues first became an urgent question. Later Peking took the defence of the country partly into its own hands, undertook responsibility for the development of railways, posts and telegraphs, and other innovations, and thus incurred fresh financial liabilities.

The available sources of revenue were: (i.) The land tax, a sum stated in every deed of conveyance and every title to land registered at the Yamen of the Hsien; (ii.) a grain tax, also registered in conveyances and titles; (iii.) a salt gabelle farmed out by the viceregal officers; (iv.) the likin, an internal transit duty, also farmed out; (v.) the native customs; (vi.) the Imperial Maritime Customs; (vii.) the Peking octroi; (viii.) a great variety of local or Hsien taxes on consumption, production, foreshore and fishing rights, industrial installations, junks, sampans, and rickshaws.

Of all these, only the Maritime Customs and the Peking octroi were paid in full to the Central Government. The bulk of the remainder was absorbed by the expenses of local administration, and experts have estimated that only one-eighth or one-tenth of the cost of running the country was represented by the revenue transmitted to Peking. The actual sums paid by the taxpayer have never been even approximately estimated. It was the steady yield of the Maritime Customs under foreign administration which assured to the Imperial Government a budgetable revenue, and security acceptable to foreign Governments and bankers.

In essentials this system remains unchanged. The republican constitution has left a Tuchun in charge of the military forces of each province, and has amalgamated the offices of provincial treasurer and the grain and salt intendencies with the office of Sheng Chang, or Civil Governor. The Tao and Fu have been abolished; the Province and the Hsien remain. An attempt at fiscal centralization has been made by setting up a Central Salt Administration, and by creating land, grain, and likin departments in the Finance Bureau. An attempt has also been made, without much success, to open up new sources of revenue, such as wine and tobacco taxes and stamp duties. The basic facts remain: the land and grain taxes, levied in the provinces, and for the most part spent in the provinces, are the main foundations of Chinese finance. The Maritime Customs and, to a lesser degree, the Salt Gabelle, are the main sources of assured revenue to the Central Government. The position of the Central Government is, indeed, far worse than under the old régime; for only a small proportion of the revenues at which the provinces are assessed has, in fact, been remitted to Peking in recent years. On the other hand, the Central Government has incurred new debts to make good the deficit, and is anxious to undertake new financial responsibilities in respect of education and other matters. The demand for tariff autonomy springs from the natural desire of the Central Government to have unfettered control over the one sure and certain source of revenue it possesses.

Nevertheless, tariff autonomy cannot by itself solve the problem. Any large increase in the tariff would defeat its own object, by strangling foreign trade, unless accompanied by the abolition of the oppressive transit duty likin; and while Peking is ready to abolish likin, there is no guarantee that the provincial governors will not continue to collect it, or replace it by an increase in their irregular exactions. Further, no practicable increase in the tariff could assure the Central Government the revenue it needs. The present condition of Chinese finances is extremely obscure, and no reliance can be placed on the figures of recent so-called budgets; but, on such figures as are available, the yearly expenditure of the Central Government has been estimated in the neighbourhood of £80,000,000; the yield of the Maritime Customs varies between £11,000,000 and £11,500,000; the Central Government's receipts from the salt revenues have not, in fact,

amounted to more than about £6,000,000. How much of the remaining revenues nominally included in the budget ever reaches Peking is extremely doubtful.

Yet it is perfectly well established that there are sources of revenue in China amply sufficient to pay for the management of a great State. Sir Robert Hart and Sir John Jamieson both estimated that the land tax alone, if properly administered, could be made to yield over £60,000,000 to the Central Government, without adding a dollar to the burden of the peasant, expressionless peasants, whose weary and laborious hands are made to toil the harder with every new responsibility assumed by the Peking Government, and every new adventure of the rival Tuchuns. If, concurrently with tariff revision, the land and grain taxes, with their various surtaxes and surcharges, were commuted into a single charge, as the sequel to a complete cadastral survey; if the likin were totally abolished and the native customs merged in the Maritime Customs; if the proportions of each tax to be paid into the central and provincial exchequers were fairly assessed, China would possess a sufficient revenue for all purposes. It would be possible at once to secure to the provincial Governments a settled revenue that would remove the temptation to irregular exactions and civil war, and to provide the Central Government and its loyal supporters with the means of suppressing any irreconcilables among the Tuchuns.

All this, however, presupposes not only tariff autonomy but a drastic revision of the existing fiscal system, and the establishment of a system of revenue collection, responsible to the Central Government, to which all taxes would be paid, and through which the product would be apportioned to the Central and provincial exchequers. It must be frankly recognized that this involves a complete break with the financial system of some thousands of years, and that the work would almost certainly be beyond China's unaided capacity. The Central Government's need for an increased revenue has arisen through contact with the West and the partial introduction of Western ideas; China might thus fairly claim the assistance of the West in making the necessary fiscal adjustments. Yet China will certainly not accept the financial tutelage of the Powers, nor are the hands of the Powers so clean as to make them acceptable advisers.

There remains one way of escape from the impasse. It is matter of wonder that no attempt has been made to enlist the good offices of the League of Nations—of which China and the Powers are equal members—in adjusting those delicate questions, arising from the contact of two diverse civilizations, which have given rise to the problems of extra-territoriality. The League's success in the financial reconstruction of Austria and Hungary suggests that it might well be asked to examine and report on the fiscal administration of China, and to supervise the carrying out of the necessary reforms. China herself could make this request with no loss of dignity, and the Powers would have every reason to acquiesce.

It is obvious that the success of any such scheme must depend upon the co-operation, or at least the acquiescence, of the Tuchuns, and it might be necessary to confine the experiment at first to those provinces under the effective control of the Peking Government and its supporters; but the prospects of an increased revenue, equitably divided between Peking and the provinces, should secure the support of all but the extreme militarists, and with an increased revenue for the Central Government and the many honest provincial Governors, these could be brought to book. Further, any scheme which promised to place local and national taxation on

a stable and equitable basis, and to put an end both to vexatious and to irregular imposts, would unquestionably receive the support of the Hong— the countless functional associations whose power even the Tuchuns hold in respect.

The scheme presents great and obvious difficulties; but the problem calls for bold measures. The fiscal problems of China are too often spoken of as if they were confined to securing the safety of foreign capital invested in good faith in Chinese bonds or Chinese industries. These things are a matter of legitimate concern; but still more important are the problems of reconciling legitimate treaty rights with the equally legitimate demands of Chinese nationalism, and of restoring to the 400,000,000 of the Chinese people the blessings of stable government and security for life and property. For the solution of these problems a financial reform going far beyond the mere revision of the customs tariff is perhaps the first essential. The task is worthy of the League; we doubt if it can be accomplished without the help of the League.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

A POLITICAL INQUISITION IN THE MANNER OF MRS. MARKHAM.

"MAMMA," said little Arthur, "would it be possible for once to forgo our historical discussions and to devote our attention to current politics?"

"Why, of course, my dear," said Mrs. Markham. "Indeed, I think it an excellent suggestion. You have your questionnaire prepared, I presume?"

"Oh, yes, mamma," said little Arthur.

"Then let us proceed," said Mrs. Markham.

"What is truth, mamma?" began little Arthur.

"I trust, Arthur," exclaimed Mrs. Markham, "that you are not trying to be funny."

"Oh, no, mamma," protested little Arthur; "the question is simply intended to elicit information."

"I am very glad to have that assurance," said Mrs. Markham severely, "for there is a spirit of ribaldry abroad which in perilous times, such as these, is most unseemly. You ask, 'What is truth?' It happens, fortunately, that our revered leader, Mr. Baldwin, has gone very thoroughly into this question, and I cannot do better than tell you what he says, with the proviso that he was speaking as a private individual and not as the mouthpiece of the Government; though I have little doubt that in this respect, as in many others, he would receive the support of his colleagues and, indeed, of his party generally. It would take too long to tell you all that Mr. Baldwin said, but, speaking roughly, so far as I can gather, Mr. Baldwin holds that truth is relative."

"Relative, mamma!" cried little Arthur.

"Yes, my dear, relative," said Mrs. Markham; "relative to the speaker, the subject, the occasion, the audience, and the circumstances."

"That explains much, does it not, mamma?" said little Arthur.

"Much, my dear! It explains everything," retorted Mrs. Markham. "As Mr. Baldwin very justly says, politicians must talk, and the material of politicians is human nature. I need say no more."

"Is papa a politician, mamma?" asked little Arthur.

"Your dear papa, Arthur," said Mrs. Markham, "is, as you know, a master-cutler; but he takes a great interest in politics."

"Is 'Protection' politics, mamma?" said little Arthur.

"Sometimes, my dear," said Mrs. Markham. "Protection is a policy, I regret to say, much misunderstood by the lower orders. Happily, some clever gentlemen invented a method of introducing it under another name."

"I know, mamma!" cried little Arthur, clapping his hands, "the Safeguarding of Industries."

"Yes, Arthur," said Mrs. Markham, "and your dear papa and his friends are asking the kind people who arrange these matters to safeguard his business."

"If they do, mamma," said little Arthur, "shall we be very rich?"

"I hope so, my dear," said Mrs. Markham; "for, you see, the wicked Germans are making scissors much cheaper than your poor papa and his friends can make them, because they pay much lower wages than your poor papa has to pay, and the wicked Americans make scissors much cheaper than poor papa because they pay much higher wages than poor papa pays; and it is no use looking at me like that, Arthur, I am only telling you what your poor papa says; and, anyway, he tells me that their scissors are not so good as his scissors and won't cut anything but prices."

"Has Germany paid, mamma?" said little Arthur.

"I am not quite sure that I know precisely what you mean, dear," said Mrs. Markham.

"Only that papa used to say that Germany must pay," explained little Arthur.

"Of course, I understand now, my dear," said Mrs. Markham. "Yes, yes, to be sure. Germany had to pay, but there was some misunderstanding. I do not know quite what happened, but your poor papa thought that Germany would pay in gold. Germany, however, it seems, pretends that she has not enough gold, and is paying in scissors. It is all very complicated, very complicated indeed; even your papa cannot understand it, all of it, I mean. Is there any other question you wish to put, my dear?"

"One more, mamma, that will be all," said little Arthur. "What are Jix?"

"You must not say what 'are' Jix, my dear," rebuked Mrs. Markham, "but who 'is' Jix. Jix, Arthur, is the pet name of our dear Home Secretary; it is an abbreviation of Joynson-Hicks, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, the pride of his party and the terror of the Reds. But why did you ask?"

"Well, I heard papa say yesterday," said little Arthur, "that Jix was—"

"Hush, my dear," cried Mrs. Markham hurriedly, "your papa was only joking. But I think we have had enough politics for to-day. We will resume our discourse on some other occasion."

FRANK A. CLEMENT.

LIFE AND POLITICS

I LEARN that Mr. Lloyd George takes strong exception to a sentence concerning himself in my paragraph of last week on the salary of the Prime Minister; and he is, I admit, quite justified in doing so. I stated that since leaving office Mr. George had "found his own means of financial recoupment." The reference was entirely innocent, and nothing could have been further from my mind than any reflection upon Mr. Lloyd George's personal integrity. For the benefit, however, of those readers of this page, if there are any

such, who did not know the precise meaning of the sentence, I may say that I was referring only to the articles on British and international affairs which Mr. Lloyd George has been contributing regularly to an American newspaper syndicate. It has been remarked by certain recent visitors to the United States from this side that some of the articles had been unfortunate in their influence on American opinion with regard to conditions in this country. That and nothing more was the point of the sentence which has displeased Mr. Lloyd George.

* * *

I would give something to know the inside story of the Edinburgh address on Truth in Politics. The choice of theme could not have been bettered. Mr. Baldwin said the right things, and said them with point and grace. But I am much mistaken if the composition of the discourse was not a rectorial joke in the Prime Minister's best manner. Its array of great names is more impressive than anything we have seen since the time of Lord Avebury. Nearly twenty classic authorities are quoted, and there are allusions to half as many more, from Cleon to Cecil. Disraeli, I note, is not among them: two years ago he would have had a place of honour. Hobbes and Locke, Bentham and Mill, are so prominent that I suspect the Lord Rector of calling in the aid of Professor Graham Wallas! He quoted John Locke on the miserable defects of language. Well, Dr. Saintsbury will have it that Locke wrote "a disgusting style." There, perhaps, is the explanation of the rage he felt against his medium. The day is coming, by the bye, when one particular passage of the address will be quoted against its author:—

"Education that has merely taught people to follow a syllogism, without enabling them to detect a fallacy, has left them in constant peril."

Just so: those high-tariff friends of his.

* * *

Sir Edwin Lutyens has been hammered from several sides for his report on Waterloo Bridge, but it cannot be doubted that on the main question his judgment will be decisive. Wayfarers along the Embankment, looking at the sagging of the middle arches, have said to one another continually what the eminent architect now formally announces—that the bridge must eventually be rebuilt. As to suggestions for "corbelling out the parapets," or other possible attempts at widening the public, again, will be entirely on Sir Edwin's side. It is when he comes to discuss suspended footways, or an overhead bridge for either walkers or vehicles, that Sir Edwin Lutyens needs to be told that he is moving among fantastic schemes. He may be quite sure that no public authority will consider them for an hour. A good deal of nonsense has been printed about the "still barely existing bridge," as Sir Edwin Lutyens calls it. Londoners should now face the actualities. I venture to predict that Rennie's design will not be repeated. It is far from adequate to the demands of to-morrow. Nor will it be possible to build a new bridge without replanning the Waterloo area. And a good thing too.

* * *

It was not among the articles in the seventieth birthday number of the SATURDAY REVIEW that I found the most interesting item, but among the advertisements. Mudie's Library reproduced (illegibly) its advertisement from the first number of the SATURDAY. It was a list of forty-seven books selected from those being circulated by the Library in 1855. Here are a dozen of the titles: Tennyson's "Maud"; "The Newcomes"; "Westward Ho!"; Herbert Spencer's "Principles of Psychology"; W. H. Russell's "Letters on the Crimean

War"; G. H. Lewes's "Life of Goethe"; the Memoirs of Sydney Smith; Richard Burton's "Pilgrimage to Al Medinah"; Stanley's "Memorials of Canterbury"; Westcott's "Canon of the New Testament"; Leigh Hunt's "The Old Court Suburb"; Charlotte M. Yonge's "The Lances of Lynwood." These may all be described, without stretching the word, as famous books; half of them seem immortal; and a second dozen could be taken from the list without including one that the London Library has so far sent to its Lethean shades. Here, I suggest, is a very remarkable monument to the Victorians. When Mudie's sends out in 1995 a list of the books that were being read in 1825, what sort of a showing will it make alongside the list of 1855?

* * *

The "new" MORNING POST, as it is called, is catching up. The other day it printed an article from Darjeeling announcing the startling discoveries of Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose in the marvellous borderland of plant-life and consciousness, and noting some of his experiments upon the nervous and muscular system of plants, revealing their response to stimulus, their fatigue, their moral protest against bad treatment, and so forth. And on the following day there appeared, in "The Way of the World," that poor old joke about cruelty to plants which is coeval with Sir Jagadis Bose's work. A quarter of a century has gone by since his first papers on Plant Response were read before the Royal Society. During that time Sir Jagadis Bose has summarized his discoveries in half-a-dozen books of sensational importance, has lectured at all the great English universities and at the India Office, has made several triumphal tours of the European capitals, has established and built up the Bose Research Institute in Calcutta, and been acknowledged by the world as a discoverer and experimentalist of singular genius. But one final conquest remained to be accomplished: the MORNING POST had yet to be told. Let us congratulate him.

* * *

Mr. Middleton Murry has added his voice to the chorus of praise for Count Keyserling of Darmstadt and his "Travel Diary of a Philosopher." It is, he says, "one of the few necessary books for a modern man." I am not sorry to come upon this unqualified tribute from a critic of reputation and influence, for it gives me the opportunity of stating, as simply as may be, a contrary opinion. Count Keyserling is, I believe, an earnest and admirable person; but I have the honour to affirm that the "Travel Diary," so far from being a great or necessary book, is pretentious, confused, and full of self-contradiction. THE NATION reviewer dealt faithfully with it (May 25th, 1925), and that fine scholar, Mr. Edwyn Bevan, performed a salutary service, for which he deserves the thanks of every serious reader, by his brilliant criticism in the OBSERVER.

* * *

The history of the "Travel Diary" is curious. The translator says the author would not permit him to use his own judgment over a single article or comma. The text had to be treated as though it were Holy Writ. The book was efficiently published. In America at the end of last season it stood high among best-sellers in the non-fiction column. In London the literary editors can tell odd little stories about the eagerness of certain contributors to get the book for review. I, for one, do not complain of these things. Count Keyserling is a good European (though he has collected 100 men of note to write what they think, or would like to think, about marriage); and his Diary treats of the fundamentals. But as a book, or a contribution to the New Faith, I cannot believe that it will do.

"No more parades, if this is all we can look for." I suspect that to be the almost unanimous feeling of Londoners about the Lord Mayor's Show of the year. Of course, the tendency of the times in externals is against the procession. Service khaki is deadly, and the Boy Scouts are not exciting. "The horse is a noble animal, and if you let him he will still do so," but the symbolic cars to-day are mostly built on motor-lorries. Civic London cannot do very much on the Australian plum-pudding and West Indian fruits. Good as such things are, they fall into a very modest place in the Lord Mayor's realm.

* * *

A few weeks ago I remarked upon the practice of our literary journalists in the matter of attaching Mr. and Miss to pseudonyms. That distinguished poet, Mr. Gordon Bottomley, has since gone one better. He is speaking of the pure form of English spoken alongside Gaelic in the Highlands: "Fiona Macleod first realized this, but *her* discovery of dreamland left the actual country still largely unexplored." Thus, by virtue of his feminine pseudonym, William Sharp becomes a woman.

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ARMISTICE DAY CELEBRATIONS

SIR,—Your contributor "Kappa," discussing the postponement of the Armistice Day Ball at the Albert Hall, congratulates Mr. Sheppard on his "extraordinary" victory, and observes that the original protest was "nothing more than a gentle editorial note" in Mr. Sheppard's monthly, "St. Martin's Review." "Do not talk to me," comments the astonished and delighted "Kappa," "about the influence of the million-power Press!"

Nothing is further from my desire than to talk to "Kappa" on this limitless subject; but may I point out in a sentence that he is the victim of an innocent fallacy? Nobody would have heard of the gentle editorial note in "St. Martin's Review" if the million-power Press of all grades had not given it enormous publicity and opened wide its columns to the expression of public opinion. Does this annoy "Kappa," or will he graciously admit that the naughty boys of the popular Press have done their one good deed of the year?—Yours, &c.,

ARTHUR J. CUMMINGS.

"The Daily News,"
Bouverie Street.

THE FOOD COUNCIL AND THE BAKERS

SIR,—I put no estimate on my capacity as a special pleader, as Mr. William B. Neville chooses to call me in a letter in *THE NATION* of October 31st, but I know that the baking trade, while it requires its case to be stated to a public that has been bewildered and bamboozled by a rampant Food Council and a more rampant Press, needs no special pleading. The trade also has a right to protest against the presence of Mr. Dudley on the Food Council, because he is intimately interested in a trading organization that competes, and, as bakers say, under specially favoured conditions by the law, with ordinary bakers.

I recognize the "growing power of the co-operative movement," without, however, admitting in the least degree its "service to the consumers." The policy of the Woolwich Society, with regard to price, seems to be to keep at least a halfpenny per four-pound loaf below the price charged by the London wholesale bakers. But even at that, the Co-operative bread is not cheap; it is simply sold at the price commensurate with its quality. All over South London there are small bakers who sell better bread at the same price as the Stores. This I know by direct examination, often repeated.

As for the practice of the Co-operative Societies in making bread a "leading article," to sell cheap, as the spearhead for penetrating new districts, they keep the operation for specific times, when forward movement is particularly desired. The Royal Arsenal Society built a large bakery at Brixton before it had customers near to keep it going even a little. It was started, and bread was sold cheap, at a loss, until the members of the Arsenal Stores complained loud enough for outsiders to hear that they could not see why their bread should be dear, that people in Brixton might have it cheap. The Government, during the War period, kindly relieved the Society of its responsibility with regard to the Brixton bakery. Lucky Society! Mr. Neville parades, as usual, the "aggregate surplus of £150,000" in five years, carefully avoiding, again as usual, the word profit. I have already given my expert opinion as to why the Society's bread pays, even at a halfpenny under the highest London price—because it is also sold at a high price, according to quality. But the point for harassed traders, who do not trade under the artificial shelter of the "Industrial and Provident Societies Acts," is that, if they had made a profit of £150,000, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have required, during the five years, at least £33,750 as his share. The Royal Arsenal did not pay anything of that, but used a considerable proportion of it to open a good many of its sixty-one shops.

The parade of the "organization which had centralized production in two large factories, under the most modern conditions, employing the latest machinery and plant," may be very impressive to people with no inner knowledge of the trade, but is nonsense to those who know. There is no space to explain the matter here, but that there is nothing in it may be gathered from the fact, which Mr. Neville cannot dispute, that all over South London, where this Society trades, there are hundreds of bakers making better bread and selling it at the same price, and with no more plant, in the way of machinery, than a dough-mixer and a small electric motor. The fact is that the labour cost of manufacture to the small baker, paying full union rate of wages, may not be more than 5s. per sack. To the establishment full of machinery the cost may not be less than 2s. 6d. per sack, and, if all subsidiary items connected with the machinery are faithfully entered, it may be considerably more. But this saving, at the best, is only a little over half a farthing on a two-pound loaf. When it comes to distributing the bakery product, that of the large establishment—which must, on account of its quantity, be carried far afield—costs twice as much as that of the small baker who distributes round about his own neighbourhood. How hard some of the fully equipped bakeries are pushed is shown by the fact that more and more they are confining themselves to shapes of loaves that need the minimum of manipulation and no skill. The loaves are coarse and unfinished in appearance.

Mr. Neville tries to impress on your readers that it is the "superior business organization" of his Society which enables it to sell bread ½d. to 1d. under the "Master Bakers' official price in London." But the interesting point about this absurd plea is, that what he calls the "Master Bakers' official price" is the price set by the large bakers, some of whom have larger bread-manufacturing establishments than the Royal Arsenal Society, while in their "business organization" they have nothing to learn from Co-operative Societies. The small bakers, who, the Food Council implies, are 47 per cent. of London bakers, and who make no special claim to organization, sell at the same price, or less, than the Royal Arsenal Society.

The fact is that the Co-operative movement has established an industrial estate within the State; sucking sustenance from the life-blood of the latter, but shirking the share it should contribute of the national maintenance. It lives a parasitic existence. All that other traders ask is that this privileged state of affairs should cease.

In answer to Mr. J. Francis, of Highgate, whose letter appeared in last week's *NATION*, I may suggest, with regard to his first complaint, that this is England not Italy, and, as a heavily taxed citizen, I claim a right to criticize this or any other Government; and a right to try and get the truth stated to the Government's master—the people. But Mr. Francis does not state even that little part of the case

properly. I did not attack the Government for "appointing the Food Council," but for appointing certain people interested in Co-operation on that Council; in appointing, also, people without training and without knowledge to supervise prices of goods the adjustment of which requires experience and technical knowledge.

The collection of lists of bread prices over London and in provincial centres was just the sort of absurd "inquiry" which a council of amateurs would undertake. There is no possible or fair flat rate for bread. Even so, the variety of prices "discovered" by the Food Council was common knowledge to every intelligent working woman in London, and proves that the people have an ample choice as to the price they will pay for bread and that the baking trade is not, and cannot be, a monopoly or governed by "rings" of any sort. Prices in Birmingham and Liverpool are not economic but competitive prices; at the moment, in Birmingham there exists a "Bread War," because a grocery firm, ostensibly to hurt the local Co-operative Society, has reduced the price of bread to 7½d. That sort of thing has nothing to do with the fixing of an equitable price for bread.

Mr. Francis evidently knows nothing about the history and life of the baking trade, or he would know that before there was any Food Council bakers altered their prices up or down whenever the price of flour changed by 4s. per sack, with constantly varying profits, because they were only allowed to alter prices and not weights. Flour dropped 8s., and bread dropped 1d. per four pounds. The Food Council had nothing to do with the change except to take advantage of it to filch some credit for the situation.

As for the public, I think it is easily misled, and the Council in its arrogance, and helped by an ignorant, careless, and sensation-mongering Press, misled it.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN KIRKLAND.

National Bakery School,
Borough Polytechnic.

COLONEL OLCOTT AND THEOSOPHY

SIR,—“Kappa’s” references to Colonel H. S. Olcott, the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society, in last week’s “Life and Politics,” are not in the best of taste. May I remind him that his slandering of the dead Colonel is as offensive to Theosophists as were the recent libels upon William Ewart Gladstone to present-day Liberals?

1. “Kappa” puts the word Colonel in inverted commas—presumably because he is doubtful about the validity of Colonel Olcott’s rank. The facts are simple. Colonel Olcott’s passion for liberty drove him to enlist in the Northern Army on the outbreak of the American Civil War. After being invalided out of the army he was appointed Special Commissioner of the War Department, and later, Special Commissioner of the Navy Department to investigate certain abuses. From the official testimony to the value of his services I take the following sentence: “More than all, I desire to bear testimony to your entire uprightness and integrity of character, which I am sure have characterized your whole career, and which to my knowledge have never been assailed.” Later still, Colonel Olcott became counsel in Customs and Revenue cases, and gave up his practice to take part in founding the Theosophical Society.

2. So far as “Old Diary Leaves” are concerned, anyone who has read those volumes will know how far from the truth is “Kappa’s” description of them as “a rollicking chronicle of fraud.” Some words of Colonel Olcott’s in his Foreword to “Old Diary Leaves” are very applicable in this connection:—

“To kill the Theosophical Society, it is first necessary to prove its declared objects hostile to the public welfare, the teachings of its spokesmen pernicious and demoralizing.”

Perhaps “Kappa” will address himself to this task? It would be more profitable, from your readers’ point of view, than gossip about the alleged faults and shortcomings of individual leaders of the Society.

3. As to “Kappa’s” wonderful story about the origin of “Koot Hoomi,” I am reminded of the late Mr. A. P. Sinnett’s reply to a charge of a similar character made as long ago as 1884. He then stated that Koot Homi is the name of a Hindu Rishi who is mentioned in more than one Purana; that his code is one of the eighteen codes, written

by various Rishis, which are preserved at Calcutta in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society; and that Monier Williams refers to this code under the name Kuthumi (see “Indian Wisdom,” p. 305). Readers interested in this subject will be well advised to read the article “The Moryas and Koothomi” in “Five Years of Theosophy,” which may be referred to at the library of the Theosophical Society in England, 23, Bedford Square, W.C.1.—Yours, &c.,

BASIL P. HOWELL.

32, Abercorn Place,
St. John’s Wood, N.W.8.

[“Kappa” writes:—

“1. Mr. Howell is right on his first point. I put ‘Colonel’ in inverted commas because I was doubtful of H. S. Olcott’s regular military rank. Mr. Poultney Bigelow, the well-known American publicist, states in his autobiography, ‘Seventy Summers,’ just published, that Olcott was not entitled to be called Colonel. Nor does Mr. Howell himself assert it.

“2. The quotation from ‘Old Diary Leaves’ has no relevance to my point. I was referring to Olcott’s description of his and Madame Blavatsky’s adventures in India and America. ‘A rollicking chronicle of fraud’ is, I admit, a phrase that was not warranted in the circumstances, since I was not offering evidence on a controversial matter.

“3. My ‘wonderful story about the origin of Koot Hoomi.’ The story is not mine. It has frequently appeared in print. I merely noted the attitude of some of A. O. Hume’s friends. Mr. Howell’s reference to Kuthumi and the eighteen post-Manu codes does not accord with the statement made by Monier Williams in the passage referred to. In any case, the linking of the ‘mythical lawgiver’ Kuthumi with the Mahatma Koot Hoomi of Tibet is a masterstroke of identification.”]

SIR EDWARD GREY

SIR,—I have read the passage in Sir E. Grey’s speech of August 3rd, 1914, cited by Mr. Woolf, and I find there no reference to the naval and military conversations and no argument that would not be perfectly valid had those conversations never occurred.

Sir Edward Grey assured the French Ambassador, not once but many times, that he could not commit this country to war, but that Parliament would have to decide at the time when war became imminent. He however expressed, both to the French and the German Ambassadors, his own personal opinion that if France were the victim of an aggressive attack, England would come to her assistance. In these circumstances it was natural that the French, confident that war would not come unless they were attacked, should concentrate their naval resources in the Mediterranean, relying on British protection in the Channel, protection which would be compelled by British as well as French interests. The naval situation was easy; not so the military situation. Here it seemed natural that both parties should recognize that if the *entente* had any meaning at all it would, in certain circumstances, involve military intervention. This being the position, it was prudent and wise to concert measures as to the method of intervention should the British Parliament authorize it. Had Sir E. Grey entered into an agreement as to the fact of intervention and the circumstances in which it would be obligatory, I should agree that he would not have been justified in saying that the freedom of this country was not compromised. An agreement as to method, reserving complete freedom to Parliament to decide whether intervention should take place at all, seems to me a totally different thing.—Yours, &c.,

CHAS. WRIGHT.

RED HAZARDS

SIR,—Your article last week on Mr. Baldwin and his party ends with a happy witticism drawn from the world of billiards. May an impenitent Tory attempt to cap it with the suggestion that the boot may possibly prove to be on the other leg, and that the policy of “potting the Reds” may turn out a winning hazard?—Yours, &c.,

G. GRANT MORRIS.

Corpus Christi College,
Cambridge.

NOTES ON LAW AND ORDER

By J. A. HOBSON.

II.—THE REVOLT AGAINST REASON*

NOT in the practical fields of social and personal conduct alone does the problem of the limitations of Law and Order arise. In the world of philosophy and science thinkers have been eagerly competing to limit the reign of reason and the competence of logic. In part, psychology has forced their hands, by laying bare the origin of reason as a tool of the animal instincts. As a river can never rise above its source, so reason, however freed from its original servitude to the senses, can never answer the final questions about the nature and purpose of the universe or of man's place in it. Hence we find thinkers so different in the texture of their thinking as Bergson and Vaihinger placing the only valid answers to these ultimate questions in the realm of practical experience.

There is "system" or "order" in Nature as in our thinking about Nature—there is possibly a system if we could reach it, though we cannot—but there are not departmental systems. Yet pride and a sort of æsthetic craving incessantly impel thinkers to piece together their bits of intellectual order into a completeness and an objectivity they do not possess. This is particularly true of thinking in fields where thought is not closely amenable to what are termed hard facts, *e.g.*, history, the mental and social sciences, philosophy.

There is among philosophers a desperate desire to incorporate in a system of thought elements essentially recalcitrant against system. It is, I think, a last attempt to save the face of formal philosophy. For the admission, that thought and language are in origin and function incapable of doing more than confronting us with a series of irreconcilable positions, implies the renunciation of philosophy's secular boast to place a coping stone upon the edifice of human knowledge.

But the revolt against systems of thought goes further. The disappearance of the hard self-sufficing specialisms of physics and chemistry, of the division between the organic and inorganic sciences, of the separation of biology from psychology, the interpenetration of the social sciences, all testify to a loosening of the entire thought process. Most of all is this seen in the disposition of the great seminal thinkers of our age to break away from formal scientific presentations in order to use artistic or loose literary devices for the communication of their thought. So humourists like Tolstoy, Shaw, and Anatole France couch their philosophy of life in dramas or in fiction sketches, while Samuel Butler and Havelock Ellis, the most stimulating general thinkers of their age in Britain, have sought even looser methods of expression. The return of the Diary is perhaps the best tribute to the success of the revolt against the arrogance and falsity of over-system. For in these records of passing thoughts and feelings we may hope to escape the temptation to fill out our fragments of personal experience into some excessive pattern of objective truth. The new humour of psychology justifies the suspicions which practical man has always entertained towards the theorist, of presenting his private fancies as systems of authoritative principles. This temptation creeps from theory into practice. A panegyrist of Mr. Justice Holmes described him as "free from the disposition to substitute his personal prejudices for the constitution of the United States." The advice of the aged scholar to the young student entering his career of intellectual research, "Take care, my son, lest you find what you are looking for," is a salutary warning. For the desire to discover some hidden truth and to present it in an interesting and elaborate design drives the scholar and the scientist to the most intricate modes of self-deceit in the selection and rejection and appraisal of

evidence and the processes of reasoning they employ, all conducted, they easily persuade themselves, in the dry light of disinterested science. The practical man, doubtless, carries his suspicion of the intellectual life too far, and scholar and scientist feel themselves able to meet contempt with contempt. How should the ignorant appraise the learned? But when the learned themselves recognize the humour of their processes of system-mongering, and return to a simpler intellectual life, the inkling in the practical man's mind becomes illumination. Psychology performs no greater service than in thus turning the light of comedy upon the pretence of Reason to be Master—or even Freeman—in the human household. The main difference between the practical man and the intellectual is that the former doesn't even want to be completely reasonable, while the latter thinks he does but doesn't, and cannot.

This brings us round again to our theme, "How much Law and Order" does man require of Life? The intellectualist will tell us we can never have too much, that beyond the ground he has reduced to order lies a boundless hinterland for further risk and industry in discovery and cultivation. But this does not answer our inquiry, which is addressed to the process or method of the intellectual life. The idea of precise order is too dominant in our intellectual life. It is not enough that we are engaged in extending order and security over wider tracts of life and thought. There still remains Nature's demand for risk and chance and adventure as desirable on their own account. No doubt every science has its borderland of adventure, but the adventurers are few as compared with the many who spend their time in the intensive cultivation of tracts already well surveyed and broken in. Here, too, civilization imposes overmuch of safe drudgery and makes too little provision for a dangerous life.

But why, it will be said, this stress on dangerous living? Peace and orderly plenty, with the innumerable little chances and changes of this mortal life, are good enough for us! And as for the intellectual life, science, that introduces ever more exactitude into new fields of knowledge, satisfies all requirements. The answer is that these things do not satisfy. Just as in city life, so in academic life, there remains "the call of the wild"—a breaking away from the reign of law. Perhaps we ought to be satisfied with freedom within the law. But we are not. The demands of the creative intelligence, the urge for life, are not directed merely to conquering new kingdoms, in the sense of imposing order upon them. The human mind and the human body need areas of disorder, of risk, caprice, or undirected activity. I once met a sage who told me that he set aside one day each week in which to reverse all the little regularities of work and personal habits that occupied the other six—so as to preserve his freedom. Perhaps this was what God meant by his seventh day of rest—for he was not really tired. But all such use of holidays is a too mechanical device. What is needed is a free margin of disorder around the order of our lives so as not to take ourselves too exactly. It may be (as Wordsworth points out) that within these margins of free living and free thinking some hidden qualities may find expression. Burke is seldom counted nowadays among the "philosophers." Yet there was deeper "philosophy" in his plea for "the unbought graces of life" in an age of "sophisters, economists, and calculators." But, after all, even this plea for the finer utilities may be an improper concession. It may be better for the unbent mind to play a game of chance as a sacrifice to the Goddess of Unreason.

* The previous article appeared in THE NATION of October 24th.

SCIENCE

FREUD AND HIS CRITICS

II.*

THE utterances of medical critics of psycho-analysis constantly reveal a confusion of thought which discerns in it an affront to the solid sanctities of cerebral physiology and pathology. Leaving out of consideration the validity of its findings, the very *direction* of its inquiries is regarded as a wild-goose chase after flimsy and mystical substitutes for the sober and respectable data of the post-mortem room and the laboratory. One cannot help sympathizing with the public-spirited protests of these distinguished medical stalwarts, bred in the sturdy tradition of a Victorian conception of Science. They honestly believe that they are combating tendencies obstructive and inimical to the progress of Science, and there is something admirable as well as pathetic in the spectacle of trusty watch-dogs valiantly barking up the wrong tree. And meanwhile there is food for ironical reflection in the fact that the object of their scientific heresy-hunt is simultaneously denounced from the strongholds of mysticism as an intolerable application of the methods and principles of physical science to the study of mental phenomena. A simple illustration may serve to focus the main issue. Suppose that I order my servant to bring me a cup of tea at 3.30 instead of 4.30 and that she punctually obeys this order. Here is a situation which may be studied from a purely psychological standpoint without in any way challenging the importance of physiological research. Certain factors would come within the purview of laboratory investigation. Others, such as the bearing of early influences on the formation of the character trait of punctuality, the present motivations sustaining it, &c., would come within the scope of the genetic and dynamic formulations of psycho-analysis.

Again, suppose that I hypnotize her to relieve her of a headache, and while she is in the hypnotic state suggest to her that she shall bring my tea at this unusual time. In accordance with the findings of numerous such experiments, she would obey such a suggestion, but would not be aware of the real reason for her conduct and, if questioned, would supply an erroneous one, *e.g.*, that I looked tired and would be glad of an earlier tea. In other words she would be unaware of an effective motive governing her conduct, and, in spite of the fact that she was unaware of it, this causal factor could be legitimately and intelligibly spoken of in psychological terms as a *motive*. Without committing ourselves to any hypothesis as to neural correlates, we could say that from the psychological standpoint she was obeying a command, although she was unconscious of the fact, or more briefly that she was "unconsciously" obeying a command. Or we could say that some unknown process was going on in her nervous system, which if accompanied by consciousness, would be realized as "obeying a command." The description of such a phenomenon can easily become a question of logomachy. The evidence derived from the data of psycho-pathology that processes which, if accompanied by consciousness, would be described as motives, wishes, &c., can effectively govern behaviour, without the subject's realization of their existence, is overwhelming and final.

Again, suppose that the servant has an unbroken record in my service for punctual obedience, and that on this occasion she forgets to bring my tea at the time arranged. She "can't think" why she forgot. But suppose that during her embarrassed apologies she suddenly realized that something in my manner, while giving the order, now reminded her of her father on a painful occasion in childhood when she was strongly disposed to defy his authority. At this point a hypothesis might be constructed to explain her forgetting. We might begin with the fact that, just as, in the case of hypnotic suggestion, she had obeyed me without knowing it, in this case she had disobeyed me without knowing it. We might explain her disobedience as due to an unrealized association between myself and her

father, activating childish tendencies to defiance of authority. Her "forgetting" permitted the expression of these without outraging her conscious standard of behaviour towards myself.

I am not here concerned with the correctness of such an explanation. I am concerned with the validity of this sort of explanation, which postulates the existence of unrealized factors in present thought and behaviour, grounded in past experience and capable of being usefully and intelligibly stated in psychological terms without irreverent disregard of the central nervous system. The hypnotic experiment proves beyond a doubt that such factors can operate in this way. During a psycho-analytical investigation the evidence is, of course, less immediate, although in the long run none the less overwhelming. But even in psycho-analysis the evidence is sometimes as direct and immediately verifiable as that which witnesses could sustain in a court of law concerning the hypnotic experiment. It has several times been the experience of the present writer to reconstruct from psycho-analytical data an infantile situation which has been confirmed down to refinements of detail from the evidence of actual eye-witnesses. Such confirmation, of course, plays no part in the process of cure, which depends solely on the subject's realization at first hand of hitherto unrealized factors in his mental make-up.

At this point it is necessary to turn to what might be called the political rather than the scientific aspects of the present controversy. As the result of half a lifetime of laborious investigation a distinguished psychopathologist, whose personal integrity and scientific standing are acclaimed by his most vigorous opponents, has recorded certain views concerning mental development which arouse strong incredulity and opposition in those who have not been confronted by the evidence which a historic accident brought within his ken, and which can be verified only by strict observance of the conditions under which the original discoveries were made. In spite of the understandable unpopularity of these conclusions, they have been confirmed and put to the practical test of therapeutic efficacy by close on three hundred trained practitioners throughout the world, who are continuously extending and amplifying the diverse applications of these discoveries to a dozen fields of research. In each of the cognate sciences affected by these discoveries one or more distinguished authorities have, on purely intellectual grounds, recognized their revolutionary significance and have accepted the main purport of this "new psychology," in some cases with reservations as to matters outside their range of observation. To turn to the journalistic fringes of scientific controversy, there has been equally ignorant acclamation and abuse of the new doctrines. On the balance, perhaps, more harm has been done by the acclamation than the abuse.

But recently there has appeared a genuinely disturbing portent in the temple of scientific discussion. An experimental psychologist whose work has commanded general respect from scientific colleagues suddenly stamped and flung to the winds all the traditions of his calling. He published a "sober and dispassionate" criticism of Freud which, in plain English, amounted to this. Freud's formulations were illogical absurdities which a sentence could shatter. Thereafter only an imbecile could give them a moment's consideration. This was not enough. Thrice he slew the slain. Freud was a "Cagliostro" foisting a shameless "confidence-trick" on the weak-minded. Still not enough. Freud and his followers were filthy-minded sexual perverts, reading their diseased imaginings into the innocent mentalities of their victims. The extraordinary fact that this noxious process cured grave mental disorders was glibly explained by the effects of suggestion. Experimental psychologists of his own standing who accepted Freudian views were, of course, unfortunate victims of the hazards of scientific research. Every scientific hypothesis lays itself open to vulgar caricature, but as a rule fellow scientists refrain from this breach of good manners. If a scientific hypothesis can be comfortably demolished by a syllogism, the obvious sequel is a decorous requiem and not a clownish dance on the corpse. But Dr.

(Continued on page 259.)

* The first article appeared in THE NATION of October 31st.

The Nation and THE ATHENÆUM

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LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

REVIEWS

NAPOLEON

The First Napoleon: Some Unpublished Documents from the Bowood Papers. Edited by the EARL OF KERRY. (Constable. 21s.)

"POWER," said Napoleon, "is never ridiculous." It is true. Power is always awe-inspiring, often worthy of veneration, not seldom terrible. In the case of Napoleon power has all these aspects, the third perhaps predominating. That is the explanation of the ten thousand volumes of Napoleonic studies which, as Lord Kerry observes, had already appeared before 1854. In the seventy-odd years since then, reckoning at least two hundred volumes a year in all languages, the total number would now be twenty-four thousand. It may easily, in fact, be double that number: assuredly the task of a Napoleonic bibliographer would be exhausting. Whatever the number, annual or cumulative, may be, it is certain that Lord Kerry's book is an outstanding contribution to the story of the first Napoleon and his time. Let us consider for a moment the character of this book. The documents are of two kinds—those which throw light on Napoleon himself, whether as politician, soldier, or human being, and those which throw light on men and manners of the Napoleonic régime, giving that régime its widest stretch with one wing in the last years of the eighteenth century, and the other extended far into the nineteenth—into the time of the third Napoleon.

In the first category the reader will find such illuminating documents as these: a conversation at Schönbrunn in October, 1809, between the Comte de Flahault and Napoleon. Napoleon is in good form—thus, "I need Germany and I need Italy; for Italy means Spain, and Spain is a prolongation of France." Then there are the minute military instructions of March, 1813, partly consisting of organization orders generally, and partly of strategic orders for his step-son the Viceroy of Italy. Again, of fascinating interest is the interview between two Whig members of Parliament and Napoleon during the Elba exile. When Napoleon says: "You will see that war will break out once again on account of Belgium," it is impossible not to shudder; not that Napoleon foresaw 1914-18 in its beginnings and endings, but that there is a peculiar something in his words as though he were looking through a glass darkly. In the same interview Napoleon refers to Josephine, who was just dead—"Oui, c'était une excellente femme," just that, detached and cold, and yet he loved her. One of the Whig M.P.s corrects Napoleon's memory on a certain point when really his own was in fault—Napoleon with charming courtesy: "Vous vous trompez, mon cher." The documents relating to the hundred days, and those to the "Bellerophon," are truly enthralling: from the first emerge the haggard figures of defeat, and from the second the bluff, indeed crude, personality of Admiral Lord Keith. Finally, the St. Helena documents should send the reader back to Lord Rosebery's "The Last Phase," to refresh his memory of a great book.

Such are some of the documents specially throwing into relief the figure of Napoleon. I pass now to the other documents, or some of them, throwing light on humanity. In the first place, it is necessary to observe how deeply romantic is the history connected with all these manuscripts. Imagine that you are in a picture gallery, and that you are looking at portraits of son, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather: this is the series:—Lord Kerry; his father, Lord Lansdowne—creator of the Entente with France; his (Lord Kerry's) grandmother, Lady Lansdowne née Emily Mercer de Flahault; his great-grandfather, the Comte de Flahault, general of division and aide-de-camp of the first Napoleon, who supported the weary

Emperor in the saddle during that last ride in the overwhelming night of Waterloo; his great-great-grandfather, a familiar and slightly sinister figure, once a gay and witty Abbé of the Paris of the Ancien Régime and admirer of Madame de Flahault, sometime Bishop of Autun, soon plain Citizen, next Prince of Beneventum, and always a supreme diplomatist, whether as Foreign Minister of France, or Ambassador in London—Talleyrand, no less!

Of these portraits, not imaginary but at once romantically and austere historical, we will pause before that of great-grandfather Comte de Flahault, for it is through him that his great-grandson Lord Kerry has been enabled to draw upon the precious collection of manuscripts of which this book is composed.

It is not possible to exaggerate the variety and brilliance of the spectacle afforded by the career of Charles de Flahault. Beginning life in 1785 as the outcome of an affair between Madame de Flahault—better known as the novelist, Madame de Souza—and the Abbé de Périgord-Talleyrand, he entered active military service in 1800—after a preliminary canter in the Hussars—at the age of fifteen, his regiment being the 20th Dragoons, which was commanded by Napoleon's brother Louis, afterwards King of Holland, and at this particular time a devoted admirer of the young Dragoon's mother. In 1808 de Flahault was made aide-de-camp to Berthier, Napoleon's Chief of Staff; in December, 1812, general of brigade; in January, 1813, Napoleon's aide-de-camp, and a little later in the same year general of division. Naturally, military duties do not make up the whole of life for a very interesting and handsome young man, and from 1807—perhaps before—till 1816 Charles de Flahault was the devoted lover of Hortense de Beauharnais, the Empress Josephine's daughter, better known as the unhappy Queen of Holland. Not the least charming part of Lord Kerry's book is that dedicated to the deciphering—for it was all kept a profound secret—of the correspondence dealing with this affair. "How deeply I love her!" writes de Flahault to his mother, from East Prussia, in March, 1808. "How happy all her little gifts have made me! The aigrette, the little necklace, the songs, the seal, the cross. . ."

But we cannot linger, though we long to, over this part of the book. Suffice it to say that the outcome of this love, which was not to end in happiness, was Auguste, afterwards Duc de Morny, one of the engineers of the *coup d'état* of 1851.

The years fled by: the terrible struggle in Russia in 1812—de Flahault's letters vividly recall it—the tremendous battles of 1813, the abdication of de Flahault's master in 1814, his return, the agony of Waterloo, and the ending of campaigns. France without Napoleon was not pleasing to de Flahault; moreover, there was a sad conclusion, just when marriage seemed in sight, to the Hortense romance, partly through de Flahault's fault—for his heart was a little too expansive—and partly through the unforgiving jealousy (or fine loyalty to love) of Hortense. De Flahault comes to England, and marries in 1817 the daughter and heiress of Admiral Lord Keith, Miss Margaret Elphinstone. It is necessary to hurry on—merely observing in passing that a full biography of de Flahault is now clearly called for from the pen of his great-grandson—to the 1860's. De Flahault has been, for some years, a member of the Commission appointed by the third Napoleon to publish the correspondence of the first Napoleon. "Even a republican and an advanced Liberal must, when he begins to write history, tell the truth. It is the only tiresome duty of a historian!" So wrote de Flahault in 1861, very much annoyed by an article in the *REVUE DES DEUX MONDES* by a republican, M. Edgar Quinet, reflecting on Napoleon's 1815 campaign. But the editing of the great man's correspondence caused de Flahault himself to quail before truth once or twice when it came to the point. Thus it is, we now learn, that mainly through his old aide-de-camp's action certain letters are

missing from the thirty-two volumes of Napoleon's official correspondence.

We have exceeded our reviewing space, and must abruptly close with this observation. Lord Kerry's book, beautifully illustrated, and edited with pious and excellent care—the notes are models of exposition, of compendious statement and style—will, without doubt, find its way into every competent library in Europe. But it should achieve an even wider popularity, for it should appeal not merely to the serious student, but also to that elusive and intractable person, the general reader.

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Wat Tyler, and Other Plays. By HALCOTT GLOVER. (Kegan Paul. 7s. 6d.)

Naboth's Vineyard. By CLEMENCE DANE. (Heinemann. 6s.)

The Stolen Horse. By CHARLES FORREST. (Benn. 5s. and 3s. 6d.)

The Glen is Mine; The Lifting. By JOHN BRANDANE. (Constable. 6s.)

WHAT first strikes a reader of this "batch of plays," to borrow a phrase from Dr. Saintsbury, is the extraordinary diversity of material, and the remarkable variety of approach. He is beguiled into believing in the trumpeted renaissance of the drama. But, on analysis, it becomes apparent that plays are being written, not because the form imposes itself upon the writers' imaginations, but because they are still the most handy *biblia pauperum*, at least of the poor in spirit. If none of these plays is boring to read, some would be wearisome to see: the old discredited cry rises to the lips, "This is not a play!" Most are not, it is clear, conceived primarily as drama, that is from a profound emotional interest in the way people behave when placed in certain situations. The books are, in the order given at the head of this review, a socio-morality document, a morality, a paper on psycho-analysis, an essay in biography, a poetic statement of ideas, two historical studies, and finally, only two books of plays, though Mr. Glover's should be counted a half; or, out of a total of twelve pieces, five at the most are plays proper. The rest do not, to adopt a judgment of Coleridge on poems, contain within themselves the reason why they are so and not otherwise, and thus cannot ultimately please.

Of Mr. Brandane's two plays of the Hebrides, the second is the better, for though the first is gay and spirited and full of fun, Mr. Brandane has not yet cleared his mind as to his treatment of comedy. His tragic drama, "The Lifting," a story of the '45 period, is a good play, but for a little weakening at the end. The movement of it tells, play and characters alike are alive, but by using almost the same idiom as Synge, the author challenges comparison with that "little master." It is not only that his phrases are not, like Synge's, "as highly flavoured as a nut or an apple," but that they never become the final probe which reveals the recesses of character. It is certainly a play one would like to see acted, especially by the Scottish National Players, and it ought to have a successful run.

"The Stolen Horse" is placed in a smuggling, gipsy-visited district "more than a hundred years ago," and is, speaking to the letter, a rattling good play. It carries you along so that you are excited by the events and interested in the characters, the situations being good enough to call forth naturally that higher state of excitement requisite to the drama. The "Measure for Measure" situation introduced is well carried out, and the necessary surprise is brought about not by events, but by character development, for surprise does not lie in the unexpected, but in the convincingness of the twist given. Another play that should run,

In "Wat Tyler" Mr. Glover seems to have stuck too close to historical fact to allow his imagination to work, but his second play, "The King's Jewry," is of altogether richer material. The subject is the expulsion of the Jews by Edward I., and the scenes, mainly within the Jewry, are clearly and passionately conceived. Mr. Glover succeeds in being concise as well as voluble, and his economy is of matter and handling, as it should be, and not of thoughts and words, as it should not. The result is a moving and satisfactory play. Of his third, "Hail! Cæsar," it is harder to speak: the theme, that of right to kingship, is more abstract, and is embodied in Ireland during the Norman period in England. The inevitable comparison here is not "Deirdre," but Ibsen's "Pretenders," and we see that the play lacks something of movement, and that Strongbow does not quite rise to the dramatic situation. It is interesting to note that the best plays in this batch stick as strictly as need be to the unities.

Miss Dane requires for her cast thirty-eight players, apart from a great turbulence of walkers-on, and two horses for Jehu's chariot. It is a Drury Lane gala performance, and not an idle moment! Voltaire, who loathed an empty stage as Ajax did the engendering of toads, could not have blamed it on that score, for it is as active as an angry hive, and the tumultuary voice plays a great part. It has the merit of being conceived as a play, and the Ahab-Jezabel-Jehu imbroglio is plausible. But the characters are at once too obviously and too sketchily drawn: apart from their circumstances there is nothing interesting in them; there is never any suggestion that, although they are of the earth, they are also of the sky and the sea. Because they never see themselves as figures, they never transcend the figures that we see. Perhaps this is because Miss Dane a little lacks sense of humour, and that, like nature, she is certainly not economical.

In "Robert Burns" Mr. Drinkwater has carried economy of word and thought to the pitch of hardly writing anything at all, the short, undramatic episodes consisting largely of Burns's poetry. "The truth about Burns," as Mr. Drinkwater calls it, is of the kind to gratify readers of that admirable "vulgarisateur," John o' London. "The Crusaders" is very clumsily written as drama, but it has an idea behind it, and a considerable amount of thought; but this is not aided by being expressed in pseudo-Elizabethan verse. It is not so much the form that matters, for the verse is flexible enough, as the idiom and imagery employed, which, not being of our time, deaden instead of quickening the mind. Mr. Shaikip's play is a neat little essay in psycho-analysis, but the resolution of the complex is a little unconvincing, and not half so exciting or amusing as one of Freud's "cases." It is encouraging to see current thought employed for dramatic machinery, and Mr. Shaikip has some sense of the stage, but he has not quite discovered how to fuse thought with art, so that we are interested in the case rather than in the emotions. We see, we do not experience.

"Overture," I suspect, is expressionistic; if so, Expressionism, thy name is Crudity. Mr. Vane treats us to an essay on the Vanity of Human Wishes, and decides that the only thing to do is to be k-i-n-d and leave the rest to G-o-d. One would like unreservedly to damn this play, but Mr. Vane insists now and again on being so vastly amusing that one cannot put one's facial muscles into the right attitude for severity. One feels he ought to be able to write a fantastic social comedy of great wit, and one wishes he would abandon the morality. Mr. Galsworthy writes with his usual skill in prose, his usual scrupulous fairness and bitter generosity. But in this case it is to no purpose. He tells us only what we knew before, that human curiosity is often unpleasant. Moreover, he shows us mostly very nice human beings behaving exactly as we suppose they would behave, and the index-number of tension, emotion, excitement, is uniform throughout the play. For satire he has taken the story from the wrong end; it is as though Signor Pirandello had shown us the Ponza *ménage* instead of the Agazzi circle. It is entertaining to think of authors thus quarrelling with their bread and butter, for if mankind ceased to be curious about itself no one would read novels or go to plays. A state of affairs too ghastly to contemplate.

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If this were the age of faith, Dr. Johnson would certainly be Saint Samuel, Fleet Street would be full of holy places where he preached his sermons and performed his miracles, and the Boswells, the Thrales, and the Hawkinses would all be exalted to the rank of prophets. Our age has somehow lost the art of making haloes; but a man may fairly be said to be a Saint when cabmen, who can scarcely be said to secrete "Rasselas" in their pockets, quote Johnson's sayings or invent Johnson's sayings on a wet night in the Strand, as a writer in the *Times* has lately heard them doing. Then, indeed, he has eaten his way into the fabric of life and performs all the functions of the gods, presiding over the fortunes of men, and inspiring, albeit he wears a wig, a snuff-coloured coat, rolls as he walks, and has a gluttonous appetite for dinner. There can be no doubt—these two new editions, this abridgement of the famous biography show it—that Dr. Johnson has proved himself of the stuff that Saints are made of, and, if we were to hazard a guess at the reason, it would be that he is one of the very few human beings who love their kind. Every other good quality is to be had in profusion; this alone is rare, as can be proved by counting those who can unanimously be said to possess it. One might begin with Christ and Socrates; add Shakespeare and Montaigne; perhaps Sir Thomas Crowne. Then, if we confine our search to the British Isles, whom do we find? Milton is hopelessly out of the running; so are Wycherley, Swift, Pope, Congreve. The names of statesmen and soldiers do not leap to the mind. Pepys, for all his defects, is a possible candidate; Lamb stands as good a chance as any, but it is Dr. Johnson, the coarse, moody, rough-tempered man, who possesses, by virtue perhaps of his coarseness and his moodiness, the peculiar sympathy, the majestic tolerance, the broad humour, which, when he has been in his grave a century and a half, still make the cabmen think of him on a wet night in the Strand.

That this myth-making quality springs from some personal ascendancy, and has little to do with intellect or art, is clear. People who have never read a word of Johnson's writings are inspired by this power in him to add to the myth from their own stores, by which means alone he is assured of immortality. His figure, at least, will never dry up and dwindle away; always somebody will be dabbling a fresh handful of clay on the surface. Whether the myth thus created will not, in process of time, altogether cease to resemble the actual man remains to be proved. The religion may entirely misinterpret the founder. But in Johnson's case the test is near at hand and easy to apply. There are his books—"The Rambler," the "Vanity of Human Wishes," the "Tour to the Hebrides," the "Lives of the Poets," and it cannot be denied that they fix and refine features which, under the influence of the myth-makers, tend to wobble and to spread. In the first place they make us revise that part of the legend which will have it, for the fun of exaggeration partly, that Johnson laboured always under what Canon Ainger called "the Johnsonian incubus." He was pompous and sententious and Latin. It took all Lamb's genius to liberate English prose from the thrall. With this in mind we open the "Lives of the Poets," and what do we find? A prose which, beside our daily diet of *Times* leaders and statesmen's letters, appears brief, pointed, almost elegant; which alights with all its feet neatly together for the most part and exactly upon its meaning; which indulges frequently in a thrust or lunge of phrase of the utmost vigour and vivacity. "Among this lagging race of frosty grovellers he might still have risen into eminence," and so on. The words occur in that life of Milton which is more often quoted as an example of the perversity of the great critic's judgment than of the grace and elasticity of his style. And he goes on, warped by one of those prejudices which tend to twist his judgment from the straight, to comment a little censoriously upon "a kind of respect,

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The "Debt to Greece and Rome" series is for conversation. "The Writers of Greece and Rome" is presumably intended for examinees; though it is difficult to say for whom the book is written. The sections on each author are too short to be enlightening. Mr. Norwood is at his best on Plato, partly because he devotes a good deal of space to the "Laws," a work which most people find too painful to read. The illustrations, often of scenery, are the most agreeable feature of the book.

"Primitive Culture in Greece" is a more serious book than any of these. It, too, is designed for the general reader, and is a compendium of recent researches on Greek Anthropology, though the author is not frightened of holding views of his own. His object is to deduce the amount of quite primitive cults that continued in Greece and to cast light on the primitive religion of pre-Achaian Greece. The habits of the Arcadians are particularly interesting. Such a book as this cannot really be adequately noticed here. Hence it is best to recommend it generally and hurry on. Mr. E. S. Hoernle also translates for the general reader, selecting passages from "The Persians," "The Seven Against Thebes," and "Prometheus Bound," and rendering them with a rhythm that bears some resemblance to the original Greek. Mr. Hoernle in his preface pokes some very good fun at his predecessors. Mr. Hoernle's translations are very like Greek: it is rather doubtful, however, if they are very like English.

Mr. Hoernle is often baroque, but even that is preferable to writing sham Swinburne, a charge that has been brought against Professor Gilbert Murray, who remains the most generally read of all translators. Anyone who has studied all the volumes mentioned above should be in a position to hold his own anywhere.

BIOGRAPHY

- Reminiscences of a Maynooth Professor.** By WALTER MACDONALD. (Cape, 18s.)
Brigham Young. By M. R. WERNER. (Cape, 21s.)
Life and Letters of William Boyd Carpenter. By H. D. A. MAJOR, D.D. (Murray, 16s.)
Arnold Thomas of Bristol: Collected Papers and Addresses. With a Memoir by NATHANIEL MICKLEM, M.A. (Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.)
Grover Cleveland. By ROBERT MCELROY, Ph.D., LL.D., F.R.H.S. (Harpers, 21s.)
The Farington Diary. By JOSEPH FARINGTON, R.A.—Vol. V. (1808-1809). (Hutchinson, 21s.)
Inland Far. By CLIFFORD BAX. (Heinemann, 10s. 6d.)
Memoirs of Life and Art. By W. SHAW SPARROW. (The Bodley Head, 12s. 6d.)

It is not very long since one could gain a reputation for seriousness amongst those who disapproved of seriousness by declaring that one read biography and memoirs in preference to fiction. Biography dealt seriously, if discreetly, with admittedly great subjects, and memoirs were not written from the point of view of a lady's-maid. But Moore burned Byron's papers, and Lady Blomfield's Memoirs show the diplomatists of Europe on their best behaviour, and that pretentiousness and false emphasis which characterized much nineteenth-century biography has led to the reaction that made Viscount Morley foolishly pray that no life of him should be written. Instead of the trivial deceptions of the Victorian biographer, we go in to-day for trivial truths. They are better, since they give more variety to personality, but the revelation of greatness's littleness is in danger of so belittling greatness in the eyes of the majority that now every clever mediocrity tends to think his memoirs of himself and his friends are of interest and even importance. Which would not matter if only publishers' judgment, too, had not been unbalanced by that mischievous genius of Mr. Strachey. However, it has been. The least significant side of Mr. Strachey's work was the point of departure for a new fashion. While serious people are reading fiction again, the frivolous are demanding biography. And they are getting the sort of biography they want.

Of the eight books under review, only one is likely to be read by people who are interested seriously in character and the drama of character. Dr. Macdonald's book is perhaps the most important that has come out of Ireland since "Ulysses." It may be that only Irishmen will appreciate it fully, but the Roman Catholic Church has been an important factor in English politics for two generations, and is becoming an important factor in English social life, and for Englishmen the book will throw much light on the organization and activities of Catholicism in a country that acknowledges its supremacy, and its influence in matters that affected English history profoundly. Macdonald was professor of dogmatic theology at Maynooth, but he was a free thinker—not a Freethinker. His first book on the origin of motion was put on the Index, and he failed to get an imprimatur for any of the seven theological books he afterwards wrote. He acquiesced in the rulings, but he scorned unthinking authority, and wrote and left these reminiscences to justify himself against it after his death. It seems like trying to have things both ways. But the attitude he took up with regard to Sinn Fein shows that, however wrong-headed he might be, he was no coward. If he did not think much of the intelligence of his Holy Father the Pope, he believed ultimately in his Holy Mother the Church. He was not one of those amusing but contemptible priests one can meet in Ireland as elsewhere who preach Catholicism from the pulpit and Philosophic Doubt from their parlour sofas. In a sense Macdonald recalls Newman, but he was without literary pretentiousness, and he had very little of Newman's always rather adolescent self-pity. The book has been excellently edited by Mr. Denis Gwynn, but the index is not exhaustive.

Mr. Werner, having published a life of P. T. Barnum, has found another congenial subject in Brigham Young. His book covers the whole history of Mormonism to the death of Young, thus including a sketch of the life of Joseph Smith. It is well-informed, frank, sceptical, amusing—very much the biography of to-day. If Mr. Werner fails to hold one's interest for long, however, it is partly

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"Of my own sufferings I will only say that though I do not consider myself the object of a curse, they could not be better described than by the following passage well known to you, 'In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!'"

And the Tsarina in January, 1903:—

"I am so fond of Boelke and many of the German and Dutch theosophists of the 15th and 16th centuries. . . . Can you tell me of any English authors, as I know no old philosophers?"

Arnold Thomas, of Bristol, and Grover Cleveland had many points in common, a wide charity, a profound sense of morality, but little prescience in the matter of human contrariness. Thomas, though he maintained that Congregationalists "do not believe in the priest, nor do we admit that he has any place or office at all in the Kingdom of Christ," had friendly relations with as many bishops as Dr. Boyd Carpenter had with royalties. And he had a great admiration for Newman. Amongst his books, however, "there was not much of philosophy," and he liked "Tom Sawyer," "Uncle Remus," and the works of E. V. Lucas, Pett Ridge, W. W. Jacobs, and P. G. Wodehouse. Dr. McElroy's "Grover Cleveland" is no more likely to be read outside Democratic Party circles in America than the Thomas book is to be read outside Congregationalist circles in England. It is an authorized biography, and, though it is exhaustive and interesting, it is not as exhaustive or interesting as it would be if one had the sense that it was telling the whole truth about such things as the Venezuela boundary dispute and the annexation of Hawaii by the United States. Cleveland, one is willing to believe, fought Tammany and the European Chancelleries honourably, but one should say in justice to Arnold Thomas that it is inconceivable that he could ever have descended as Cleveland did to calling his opponents "dirty liars."

Of the three volumes dealing with the artistic and social world, the fifth volume of the Farington Diary scarcely calls for comment. Like the preceding volumes, it is invaluable as a work of reference to the lighter side of English life during the period it covers, and it is admirably edited. In "Inland Far" Mr. Clifford Bax mentions that a reviewer in one of "our able (if somewhat supercilious) weeklies" observed of a former book of his that "the philosophy need not be seriously considered," and adds, "His opinion surprised me, inasmuch as 'the philosophy' was, except for a few additions, that of the Vedanta." We must confess that we do not feel that anything in "Inland Far" need be seriously considered, either the pen picture of A. E. or the account of Mr. Arnold Bax saying to his brother "with the air of a Roman Emperor summoning his gladiators, 'Come now; let's hear you defend immortality against the redoubtable Balfour (Gardiner).'" But "Inland Far" is cheerful, and will certainly please the author's admirers.

Mr. Shaw Sparrow's adventures as art student, actor, critic, and editor took him over a good deal of ground, and he must know literally hundreds of artists and aesthetes. His views on them and on art are objective and hearty, and his literary style is at moments remarkable; this sentence on Oscar Wilde especially: "I . . . disliked his emotional and flabby mouth, his soft-looking body and face, and his varied self-consciousness that responded applanusely [sic] to his wit and paradox."

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A ROMANCE OF POLITICS

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ADVENTUROUS spirits who can afford it go beyond the confines of civilization to seek what is to them the salt of life, the call for initiative in circumstances new and dangerous. Those too poor for this get the danger without the joy of initiative, and die in water-logged trenches or pass in perils of the sea lives little less monotonous than those of the factory or the mine. Mr. Soutter, born to poverty, has solved the problem otherwise. He has lived a life full of interest to himself, and, incidentally, to readers of his two books of reminiscences, a life, indeed, of many hardships and not infrequently of danger, but one that has given free scope to his remarkable powers of initiative. And he has lived it in England, the land of routine and security.

Mr. Soutter was the first to propose an independent Labour candidature, that of the late George Odger, so long ago as 1869, and he has been in the thick of the fight for Radical democracy ever since. In this way he has made the acquaintance of most of the more active spirits of the Liberal, Labour, and Irish parties, and of the leading advocates of almost all the non-party movements for franchise and other reforms; while he was, right through its history, one of the most active agents of the Free Trade Union. Mr. T. P. O'Connor wrote the preface for his first book, and Mr. John Burns has done the like for this; names of old Chartists, like W. H. Chadwick, of early suffragists, like Miss Helen Taylor, occur among his many friends, along with those who in our own day are carrying on their work.

The result is a singularly interesting book. Possibly the most effective appeal it will make will be to members of, and workers for, the Free Trade Union, with its record of brave and successful fighting for that cause; but by simply stating what happened, by letting us into the inner workings of the thing, Mr. Soutter can make even such an unpromising subject as the registration of voters in town and country constituencies interesting. Pictures of personalities who would otherwise be forgotten, as that warm-hearted, hard-working, and bitterly partizan Dr. George Cooper, M.P. for Bermondsey, are bound together with accounts of riotous meetings to protest against the Boer War, and attempts on recruiting platforms to get men into the army and in the Gretna Green factory to keep useful munition workers out of it. Mr. Soutter has seen much during fifty years of agitation, and his book is most interesting.

POETRY

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THE young poet of the present day stands awkwardly with one foot in the past and the other in the future. The achievements of the past are sufficiently great to compel his respect; contemporary performance is not yet extensive enough to demonstrate the soundness of its foundations; and the future, though not without promise, is still unsure. He is thus confronted with two alternatives, either to enrol himself among the Georgians—a distinguished, but, it may be, antiquated, company—or to take his courage in both hands and join the adventurers. If he chooses the second alternative, he can fortify himself with the reflection that the spirit of the present time differs in many important respects from that of the years before the war, and will therefore probably require to be embodied in new forms if it is to find adequate expression.

We have lost our sense of values; our most coveted pleasures, those which make the most profound appeal to our imaginations, though as alluring as ever, have lost their significance. Introspection, armed by psychology and instigated by the war, has turned what were once delights into torments. This is the spirit which animates that part of contemporary poetry which seems most original and most characteristic of the age. Mr. Laver frankly accepts this attitude. He can watch his own emotions with a detachment which was hardly possible in the days before Proust and the psychologists; and all his poems have a certain unity of tone which seems to show that this is no occasional mood, but a feeling which is a fairly constant reaction to experience. He is preoccupied with love, which he sees now as something purely physical and compelling, now as something which captivates and perplexes his whole personality. It is the mainspring of his imagination, yet his reason is driven to despise it as "a contemptible trifle"; and his poetry is the expression of this conflict. He has, perhaps, written too much—many of the pieces in this volume add nothing to the general effect; and he would have done better if, instead of isolating his moods as independent lyrics, he had set himself the more difficult, but more ambitious, task of correlating them in a single long poem. The volume does in fact begin with a long description in blank verse of a London dance, but this is a failure. The humorous passages gain nothing by being versified, and the serious parts would have had to undergo a much more drastic process of transformation than Mr. Laver seems to have thought necessary, before they could be enjoyed as poetry.

Mr. Graves's book is disappointing. It contains one serious poem, reminiscent of Mr. Hardy's "Shut Out That Moon," which begins:—

"Discourse, bruised heart, on trivial things
With laughter vague and hollow,
Conceal the sudden tear that stings,
The lump that's hard to swallow . . .
For rankly here grow nettles
With burrs and brambles prickly,
Here glide snakes across the brakes
Whose tongues do murder quickly."

We are sorry to see that Mr. Graves seems to have done what a poet should never do—he has followed his own advice; for the rest of the book does consist of trifles—mostly didactic and satirical pieces which are not sufficiently witty or well-executed to be interesting.

When we turn to Mr. Sharp and Mr. Salmon we seem to enter a past, or a passing, generation. They take their stand firmly by the Georgian lyric, and their Muses submit to the narrow confines of a "Bird-Song," "Roots," or an "Autumn Picture." Moreover, they both believe in a happy ending—Mr. Salmon rather vaguely and intermittently, it is true, for his hopes are rudely shaken by the rigour of autumnal storms, but Mr. Sharp appears to have no doubts that some of us will go to heaven. Doors are constantly

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opening to him on to the infinite, and when frogs, worms, and other creatures appear during a shower of rain,

"It is their wassail, nor can we
Measure the rapture under sod—
A million creatures drinking free
Their portion of the grace of God."

These two writers also share an interest in dialect poetry, Mr. Sharp sometimes singing in Scottish, Mr. Salmon in West Country accents. But neither succeeds in this difficult task. If dialect poets have nothing more to offer us than "hwome" or "hame" instead of "home," they would do better to write in literary English. From an artistic point of view, the most distinctive feature of any dialect is not its sound-change but its rhythm, and neither Mr. Sharp nor Mr. Salmon possesses an ear sufficiently delicate to reproduce so subtle an effect over and above the rhythm prescribed by metre.

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THERE has recently been much controversy again as to what constitutes an "essay," and no one could read these ten books without being vividly conscious of the gulf which separates what is obviously an essay from what is obviously a mere article. But modern conditions have turned so many literary men into journalists, and the standard of literary journalism has itself so much improved, that bridges have been thrown across the gulf; and over these bridges many writers wander to and fro, touching both shores in turn, but owing complete allegiance to neither. Thus, while there are still some essayists and journalists who remain on their own respective sides, the growing number of intermediate writers makes discrimination an increasingly difficult task, and a definition of the "essay" that seems plausible enough in the light of one book is apt to be contradicted by another.

Thus, waiving aside the thorny problem of "style," we might say that one certain distinction between the article and the essay lies in the fact that, while the former is produced (usually from utilitarian or propagandist motives) to supply the demand of some particular newspaper or magazine, the latter is written solely to satisfy the author's own desire for self-expression, irrespective of what market, if any, may ultimately be found for his work. And Mr. McDowall's volume would, by itself, seem to establish this view. His "Ruminations" are the reflection of a quiet, cultured mind, fond of the byways of literature, but fonder still of country lanes and churches, and happiest of all, perhaps, amid the vast loneliness of the Norfolk marshes. Only two of Mr. McDowall's essays have appeared in periodicals, and it is obvious that none of them was written with a view to "serial rights." They are neither of the length nor the character of "middles." They are highly independent and individual—"essays" beyond all possibility of cavil.

Mr. Hastings, too, is an indisputable essayist—though in spirit he is the antithesis of Mr. McDowall. Mr. McDowall is meditative, shy, austere; Mr. Hastings is assertive and pugnacious, though, like many men of full habit, he indulges in tender and sentimental moments. He ranges over a wide variety of themes, but is at his best when dealing with "provender and potations"—when describing the ritual that should attend the decorous eating of an onion, or crossing swords with Professor Saintsbury in defence of the cocktail.

When, however, Mr. McDowall and Mr. Hastings have satisfied us that an essay must be the spontaneous expression of a spontaneous mood, Mr. Lucas breaks in upon us with his bland smile. "What!" he says, "essays cannot be written to order—or for profit? Nonsense!" And we have to admit that, though Mr. Lucas's account of his motoring adventures in France, to which he has added a few "varieties" in his PUNCH vein, was written week by week for a Sunday newspaper, it is so vivacious, so intimate in its revelation of temperament, and so devoid of the dishonest enthusiasms of the conventional tourist, that it bears little stamp of its journalistic origin.

In Miguel de Unamuno's volume, translated from the Spanish by Mr. Crawford Flitch, we have a blend of personal essay, philosophic treatise, and autobiography. "The greater part of my work," says Unamuno, "has always been to disgust my neighbours, to rob them of heart's ease, to vex them if I can." A rare vitality inspires his writing, and an intense sympathy with all types of men save those who are slaves to any rigid intellectual or theological formulae. As a revelation of an eager, inquiring, and warm-hearted spirit, this book is uncommonly readable, and it gains in interest from the light which it throws upon a distinguished and representative Spaniard's hostility towards "Europeanization." The introduction by Mr. Flitch, who visited Unamuno in the island of Fuerteventura, where he was recently exiled by the Spanish Government on account of his political ideas, is itself an accomplished and charming essay.

Don Unamuno's mellowness is in sharp contrast to the bombastic asperity of Mr. Mencken, whose venom against farmers, lovers, poets, "Divine Providence," and apparently the universe in general, is, to quote his own words, "scored, in the manner of Berlioz, for ten thousand trombones fortissimo, with harsh, cacophonous chords for bombardons and ophicleides in the bass clef." If Mr. Mencken did not take himself so seriously, and regard himself as the final embodiment of modernity, we might be able mildly to enjoy his mud-slinging, as we smile indulgently at the irreverences of a youth of seventeen.

Midway between the article and the essay stands the work of Mr. Allan Monkhouse and Mr. William McFee. Mr. Monkhouse's volume is a collection of MANCHESTER GUARDIAN back-page "sketches," all dealing with life in the suburb of a North Country city. They are competent, amusing, and not without value; for, though he too can smile at Philistinism, Mr. Monkhouse differs from many writers in appreciating the fact that men and women can live in a suburb and still be human beings.

Mr. McFee is an engineer in the merchant service who is about to become a citizen of the United States. In explaining to his adopted countrymen that he has been actuated by motives of convenience rather than of patriotism, he offers, as an Englishman, some serious, if kindly, criticism of American culture and manners. For one who has necessarily led a life of action, Mr. McFee shows a wide and discriminating acquaintance with literature. But most readers will find his memories of travel and of the merchant marine more interesting.

If Mr. McFee's articles have a dash of essay, Lord Riddell's articles are articles undiluted. He takes the whole universe for his parish, and there seems to be no subject—literary, scientific, religious, or commercial—on which he cannot write "brightly" and informatively. It is impossible not to admire his skill and industry. But it is equally impossible to read more than two or three of his articles consecutively—an additional proof, if any were needed, that they are articles, and not essays.

Mr. Williamson gives the impression of being a Free Church minister in whom the potential essayist is somewhat suppressed by the preacher. His interests, human and literary, are wide, and he has "style" as well as humour. If only he did not feel under the necessity of adorning every tale with a moral, he might make a genuine and very pleasant essayist.

Mr. Atkins is a religious journalist pure and simple, and makes no pretence of being anything else. He is a capable writer, however, and brings an alert and well-informed mind, as well as evangelical conviction, to the elaboration of his theme that "true wisdom does not begin until a man suspects that a bird in the bush may be worth two in the hand."

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Wohlgemuth does not even spare his victim jokes of the "Freud-Fraud" variety.

Such an amazing defection from the principles of scientific tradition, although distressing to men of taste, would in itself be politically unimportant, but for the fact that it has rallied round itself more dignified prejudices. Let the word "psycho-analysis" appear anywhere in print, and straightway a "flying-squad," composed of Sir Bryan Donkin, Dr. Wohlgemuth, and Dr. McBride, modestly announce that in each other's writings this pernicious doctrine has been exploded. The cumulative effect of this campaign may be likened to the tactics of the Three Musketeers. They know very well that accredited exponents of psycho-analysis are restrained by a variety of considerations from undertaking duels in the popular Press, however ready they may be to meet criticisms under conditions which protect them from the obvious "Roman Holidays" of vulgarities. The fact that the present two articles are the first to appear in a non-technical journal with the approval of the British Psycho-Analytical Society surely speaks for itself, in contrast to the ubiquitous attacks of prominent opponents.

We have been reproached for our apparent timidity in avoiding open controversy. What is our confession of faith in this connection? First of all, we do not believe that, in questions weighted with tremendous emotional ballast, discussion will accomplish anything. We rely rather on the suction of theoretical vacua and the urgent practical needs of humanity. And meantime we protest against a tendency of sinister import for the future of unpopular scientific doctrines which would make them run the gauntlet of Tennessee.

JAMES GLOVER.

FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA

CURIOSITY to see what I imagined to be an average play led me to the St. Martin's Theatre, where Mr. Cosmo Hamilton's "The Silver Fox" is being acted. The first act revealed a set of perfectly imbecile people—even a best-selling author and a bad poet cannot really be so hopelessly imperceptive of life—but the second introduced a professional amorist who seemed to have his wits about him. Indeed, the last part of the second act was so intelligent as to make me think Mr. Hamilton had been pulling our legs at the beginning. But the third act dispelled the brief illusion: a rather good idea slipped through the author's fingers, and what could never have been a good play but might have been amusing—say Mr. Somerset Maugham at his third best—dwindled into emptiness. One of the protagonists is an idealist held up to ridicule, and his pure intentions are shown to be the seed of much discomfort—Ibsen at *n*th remove: another is a common-sense fellow, and the leading lady is a soi-disante "soul," who uses the amorist to work a divorce with common sense so as to marry shattering idealism. The acting was better than the play deserved, and Mr. Lawrence Grossmith, Mr. J. H. Roberts, Mr. George Curzon, and Mesdames Frances Carson and Edna Davies made the best of a bad job. The audience seemed quite happy.

Were it not that "The Cherry Orchard," "The Wild Duck," "The Sea Gull," and "The Playboy of the Western World" have achieved some measure of popular success on the London stage within the year, one would say, borrowing a phrase from Katherine Mansfield, that "The Dark Angel," the new play by Guy Bolton at the Everyman Theatre, "indubitably is the stuff to give 'em." And even in the times that are it would not be surprising if it did very well. The two heroes have beautiful natures, and the heroine, who had spent a night at a hotel with one of them during the war, offers to spend her life looking after him when, five years later, she discovers that he is not

dead, as was reported, but blind. He, however, stifling a sob, pushes her into the arms of the man she loves and bravely faces life alone. There is also a glimpse at the heroine's work during the five years amongst young women who, like herself, have slipped. And she brings down the curtain very effectively on Act I. with a dashing confession of her war-time indiscretion to her father's assembled guests. It is all very noble, and if it is insignificant, it is not, except for an occasional turn of phrase, unreal. And it is not unintelligently put together. The acting was a little heavy on the first night, but the company, which includes Miss Hilda Bayley and Mr. G. H. Mulcaster, is, on the whole, well balanced and capable, and there were six curtains at the end.

* * *

On Friday, November 6th, at the first of the Gerald Cooper Chamber Concerts, the first performance of a new and unpublished work by Dr. Vaughan Williams was given. It is called "Concerto Accademico," and is written for violin and a string orchestra. The title implies nothing more than that the work is planned according to Bach's method of alternating solo instrument and orchestra. Apart from this, there seems to be no reason for the designation at all, for the spirit of the music is so big-hearted and spontaneous, and the texture so firm and tightly drawn, that the influence of tradition and formula is entirely nullified. The thematic material is spare and concise; within the first sixteen bars or so it is stated in its entirety, and the development is based upon ingenious augmentations, diminutions, and subversions. The first movement is marked *Allegro pesante*, the second is an "Adagio" of great and telling beauty, and the last is a "Scherzo." There is a moment towards the end of the last movement when we seem to be prepared for a new episode; as it happens, it is a step back for the final release in the form of a torrential cadenza, which wavers in typical fashion between major and minor, as if the composer were saying, "How happy I could be in either!" The work is not epoch-making, but it points to the fact that Dr. Vaughan Williams has now reached that point when he can prune and eliminate, so that he may concentrate his impulses upon a small area. He is no longer experimenting here, but speaks the things he knows, and speaks with force, if not with elegance. Miss Jelly D'Aranyi played the solo part in a way that revealed that she had identified herself both with the letter and the spirit of the music; this can also be said of Mr. Anthony Bernard and his chamber orchestra.

* * *

Things to see or hear in the coming week:—

- Saturday, November 14. Germaine Schnitzer, Piano Recital, at 8.30, at Wigmore Hall.
- Lener String Quartet, at 5.30, at Wigmore Hall.
- Spencer Dyke Quartet, at 3, at Victoria and Albert Museum.
- Sunday, November 15. Wycherley's "The Plain Dealer," Renaissance Society, at New Scala.
- Monday, November 16. Sean O'Casey's "Juno and the Paycock," at the Royalty.
- Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," Lena Ashwell Players, at the Century.
- Sir Oliver Lodge on "The Link Between Matter and Matter," at 4, in the Hall of the Goldsmiths' Company.
- Parish Williams, Song Recital, at 8.15, at Æolian Hall.
- Kendall String Quartet, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.
- Tuesday, November 17. "The Old Adam," at Kingsway.
- Wednesday, November 18. Lamond, Beethoven Recital, at 3, at Queen's Hall.
- "Nicolette," at Duke of York's.
- Lener String Quartet, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.
- Friday, November 20. Gerald Cooper Chamber Concert, at 8.30, at Æolian Hall.

OMICRON.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

IN "The Twelve Adventurers and Other Stories," by Charlotte Brontë (Hodder & Stoughton, 10s. 6d.), Mr. Clement Shorter has just published twelve fragments written by Charlotte Brontë between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. Four of the fragments have been printed, in one form or another, before; the other eight are published for the first time. Literature, and certainly fiction, is not an art in which it is possible for a masterpiece to be produced by a writer in her teens. None of these stories is a masterpiece; they have, in themselves, no literary value; they are, in fact, extremely ridiculous. In the notices of the book which I have seen the critics and reviewers have seized upon these obvious facts, and have lectured Mr. Shorter rather pompously and their readers rather patronizingly on the question whether the fragments ought or ought not to have been published. The more common view seems to be that they should not have been published; Charlotte Brontë would not herself have done so; that good man, her husband, the Rev. Arthur Bell Nicholls, who, it is rumoured, never told his second wife that his first wife wrote books, and whose second wife was ignorant of the fact that her predecessor was the author of "Jane Eyre," was only prevented from burning them by Mr. Shorter—is not that enough?

There are few more irritating things than this kind of literary snobbery. Whatever may be one's opinion of the literary value of Charlotte Brontë's novels, she was a very remarkable figure in the history of English literature. This very week I have been reading a serious historical work called "Idealism and Foreign Policy," in which the author, Miss Ramsay, casually refers to the Brontë sisters as "the most original minds of their age." Miss Ramsay's estimate may be a little extravagant, but it is not ridiculous. Now the last fragment in Mr. Shorter's book was written by Charlotte Brontë in 1836, when she was twenty-one, while her first published novel, "Jane Eyre," appeared in 1847, when she was thirty-two. I simply cannot understand how any critic, anyone who takes even the mildest interest in literature, should not be interested to study what the mind which produced "Jane Eyre" in 1847 and "Villette" in 1853 was capable of producing in 1836.

As I said above, the stories in this book are extremely ridiculous. They are childish, absurd, incompetent. It was not in the Brontë nature to do things by halves, and Charlotte's childishness, even at the age of twenty-one, is incredibly childish, her absurdity overwhelmingly absurd, and her incompetence a triumph of incompetence. Yet from the critical or literary point of view, and perhaps even more from the point of view of the psychology of what we call genius, the whole book is fascinating. On the first page, in "The Twelve Adventurers," written at the age of twelve, one finds the following sentence:—

"In the inhabited parts of the genii countries there are now no vestiges of them, though it is said there have been found some colossal skeletons in that wild, barren sand, the evil desert."

I would draw the critics' attention to the end of this sentence—"it is said there have been found some colossal skeletons in that wild, barren sand, the evil desert." I have seen a good many things written by children, but I have never come across a child of twelve who was capable of writing a sentence quite like that. And all through

these fragments, despite their childish absurdity, you are continually being pulled up by some vivid flash of vision, some peculiar literary sense of the value of a phrase or a word.

* * *

But from the critical point of view, there is another thing of greater interest in this book. The attitude of mind and the literary style in many of the stories are those of the most florid "best-seller," even of the penny novelette. As the writer grows older, she seems to become more and more exuberantly best-sellerish, until in "A Peep into a Picture Book" and "Mina Laury," which were written when she was between the ages of eighteen and twenty, she is already forestalling Ouida. Here is an example:—

"She folded that offered hand, white, supple, and soft with youth and delicate nature, in both her own, and whether Zamorna's pulse beat rapidly or not his handmaid's did as she felt the slender grasping fingers of the monarch laid quietly in hers. He did not wait for the report, but took his hand away again, and laying it on her raven curls said. . . ."

That was written in 1837. There followed a gap of eight or nine years. In 1845 Charlotte Brontë was writing "The Professor," in 1846 "Jane Eyre." In both those books, and in "Shirley" and "Villette," the attitude and style of "the offered hand, white, supple, and soft," and of the "raven curls," in fact all the terrible paraphernalia of the best best-seller, can be found. But by this time something else, or rather several other things, had got the upper hand in the curious struggle which seems to have gone on in Charlotte Brontë's mind for the soul of every book which she wrote. The Rochester of "Jane Eyre" is first cousin to the Zamorna of "Mina Laury." But it is not Rochester whom we remember in "Jane Eyre"; it is the vivid picture of the small girl in the window seat reading Bewick, or the intensely real and passionate psychology of the conversation between Jane and Mrs. Reed. The typical best-seller almost always has one characteristic which distinguishes her from the ordinary more or less successful novelist, namely a passionate conviction in unreality, but, having nothing else, her books sell by the hundred thousand for a brief space while the bloom is still on her passion, but as soon as it has faded with the colours on the cover, "Two Little Wooden Shoes" disappears, and its place is taken by "The Rosary." Charlotte Brontë had all the virtues and vices of the best-seller, but she also had the virtues of a great novelist. She was one of the "most original minds of her age." Her passionate conviction was not confined to Zamorna, the Duke of Wellington in Angria, raven curls, the incredible Rochester, or other unrealities; it extended to reality. And when she allowed her passion and imagination to deal with realities which she knew and understood, she became a great writer and a great novelist. The woman who created Rochester also created the best male character ever drawn by a woman novelist. This curious contradiction is already visible in the fragments now published. "A Peep into a Picture Book" is more hecticly absurd than Ouida or anything in "Jane Eyre," and yet there is real power in it, and, particularly in the opening, a rare vividness and reality. If you read it as a kind of exercise by a writer who is teaching herself how to write, you will find it extraordinarily interesting, and you will not be altogether astonished to find that ten years later its author had written "Jane Eyre."

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

STEAD

Life of W. T. Stead. By FREDERIC WHYTE. 2 vols. (Cape. 38s.)

IN eight pages of this book I have done my very best—my poor obeisance to his shade—to say what I remember and what I feel about my old chief. My present task, as one of the diminished band which worked with Stead, is to write down what I think of the picture which Mr. Whyte presents in these two large volumes.

Undoubtedly the book must be judged by a high standard. The author is no novice. He has had his job in hand for several years. And no biographer was ever better provided with materials of the first quality—letters of top-of-the-column men, such as Morley, Rhodes, Ruskin, and Shaw; long records of long talks with Sovereigns; Carlyle and Gladstone notabilia: there is no end to the finds.

I remember, immediately after Stead went down in the "Titanic," being summoned to London by one of his sons. Would I undertake a popular Life of his father, to be published at the earliest possible date? I knew the materials were vast. For years, when at the PALL MALL GAZETTE in Northumberland Street, Stead had had, in the next street, an office in which a staff was assiduously clipping newspapers and storing typescript. Stead was called the untidiest editor in London and a flibbertigibbet; but, like some other men who have lived in excitement and some disorder, he had a passion for accuracy. Stead seldom talked with a man or woman of consequence without dictating, for safe keeping, a memorandum of what he had been told. No journalist kept a letter-book more scrupulously. When Henry Stead asked me to tell the story of his father's life, he took me into a room full of Tate sugar-boxes, packed with carefully arranged papers, every sheet of which had, no doubt, the makings of "copy" of some sort. With such unparalleled stores—Gladstone left more, but how much of it was "copy"?—I promptly characterized the notion of a popular Life as madness. Sir Edward Cook should be got to work at once on two volumes, and given six months to write them. A cheap edition would come later. My counsel was not taken. Plums from the sugar-boxes were plundered month by month for a failing REVIEW OF REVIEWS. A loving volume by Miss Stead, because it was largely devoted to spiritualism, confirmed the impression of many people, unfamiliar with the achievements of Stead, that he was a nonentity given over to spooks. Cook, who had had a close association with him when his actions were criticized severely, who had shown what he could do with Ruskin, Florence Nightingale, Garrett, and Delane, passed away. We have had to wait until thirteen years after Stead's death for a Life of the man whom Mr. Whyte, on the last page, pronounces to have been not only "amazingly, almost incredibly, good and lovable," but "the bravest and the most brilliant of all English journalists, perhaps the most extraordinary man ever seen in Fleet Street." It is strange neglect for a man of such parts, for a man who never spared himself in writing about people worthy of being written about. Journalists who are now in their fifties were lads in their teens when Stead was editing the PALL MALL. No wonder that some reviews of this book do not carry conviction. No wonder that even in a pre-war work on journalism there was no mention of Stead. No wonder that it is possible to meet leaders of the women's movement who have the poorest conception of the help that Stead gave their cause. The number of men and women who are able to judge Mr. Whyte's book, from contemporaneous knowledge of Stead's work or from close acquaintance with the man himself, in or outside his office, is small indeed.

To me, Mr. Whyte's book seems to be extremely well done. There are, to my mind, too many pages about Gordon and about Stead's first visits to the theatre at fifty-five, and there are other places, also, where condensing might have been done. But everything printed has value, if not for one reason, then for another; and Mr. Whyte, in the course of his rewriting and arranging and rearranging, must have blotted many hundreds of typed pages. Chapters succeed one another which are almost flawless. This is the most

important life of a journalist in the language. I cannot think of any writer who would have understood Stead better than Mr. Whyte has done, or would have told the world what he was like, more indomitably, faithfully and convincingly. Stead would not have been dissatisfied with the book. It is wholly in keeping with the P.M.G. tradition (for which, see not only this book but the Life of Edmund Garrett). There is in this book, as in Stead, "a certain greatness of spirit." It was worth waiting for.

Apart altogether from Stead, the book may be recommended. It is an exceptionally well documented and always entertaining account of aspects of high political and social life. It is worthier to be known because of the balm it brings to weary fighting men and women. Here and here and here in these volumes are to be seen points from which the world has visibly moved on within the space of our own lives. We now pass our years in a different world from the world through which Stead struggled, and those who come after us will live in a world rid of many of our bugaboos. Finally, the book sets our minds inwardly. When the sober and successful contemplate the hurry-scurry and vociferousness, the constant nudging of the Almighty and of everybody else, which was a great deal—not all—of the existence of the gallant subject of this memoir, people say that he was a little "unbalanced." But, judging from the strange way of life of most of us *sub specie æternitatis*, just how sane are we?

J. W. ROBERTSON SCOTT.

STATISTICS AND HYSTERICIS

The Peril of the White. By Sir LEO CHIOZZA MONEY. (Collins, 10s. 6d.)

THIS book contains a mass of interesting statistics of world-population. The population of the world is now about 1,900 millions, and it is increasing, according to Sir Leo Chiozza Money, at the rate of about 12½ millions a year. This is an alarming rate of growth, and even a glance at such figures would raise for most men the spectre of over-population. Is it possible, one instinctively asks, that the means of subsistence can be made to keep pace with this enormous demand? Is it not certain that the Malthusian law is operating and that "there are few States in which there is not a constant effort in the population to increase beyond the means of subsistence," which "tends to subject the lower classes of society to distress, and to prevent any great permanent melioration of their condition"?

From this point of view, the most salutary feature of recent vital statistics is the decline during the last fifty years of the birth-rate in every country of Western civilization. Among the white races, at any rate, there is reason to hope that the power of population is being put under deliberate restraint by human reason and that the standard of life will not in future be threatened by sheer increase in numbers.

No such danger or consolation occurs, however, to Sir Leo Chiozza Money. To him the statistics which he has so industriously collected suggest only a haunting fear that the white races will be overpowered by countless hordes of coloured men. "Renew or Die!" he cries, in a poetic effusion at the end of his book. The facts that the white races constitute less than one-third of the world's population, and that, on two out of five continents, they are hopelessly outnumbered, fill him with alarm. "White civilization, upheld by a minority of the world's people so small that, as we have seen, only 150 million people of European stock exist out of Europe, is threatened by infertility, by internecine dissensions, and by a subversive propaganda aiming at world revolution."

Sir Leo appears to have overlooked or seriously understressed two vital factors: (1) That a low birth-rate accompanied by a low death-rate may produce as large a rate of increase as a high birth-rate with a high death-rate. (2) That if the whites are to retain their ascendancy over the coloured races, it will be by superiority in quality, not in quantity. The hope for Western civilization lies not in prolific breeding, but in the cultivation of such qualities as may be worth preserving.

FICTION

- Whom God Hath Sundered.** By OLIVER ONIONS. (Seeker. 7s. 6d.)
- The Spite of Heaven.** By OLIVER ONIONS. (Chapman & Hall. 7s. 6d.)
- The Clio.** By L. H. MYERS. (Putnam. 7s. 6d.)
- The Sea.** By BERNARD KELLERMANN. Translated by SASHA BEST. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)
- Portrait of a Man with Red Hair.** By HUGH WALPOLE. (Macmillan. 7s. 6d.)
- The Big House of Inver.** By E. CE. SOMERVILLE and MARTIN ROSS. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

THE reason why of two novels apparently of the same degree of mediocrity one should become a best-seller and the other fall flat remains a mystery, but three volumes in this list might lead one to imagine that serious reputations, books that can be judged by purely critical standards, sometimes present the same difficulty. "Whom God Hath Sundered," a trilogy written by Mr. Onions before the war and now reprinted in one volume, belongs to the same literary generation as the works of Mr. Bennett and Mr. Galsworthy; it is, moreover, of the same order, or very nearly so; yet while Mr. Bennett and Mr. Galsworthy are universally known, Mr. Onions has almost been ignored. The result may partly, perhaps, be set down to a certain subtle eccentricity of temperament which transpires through Mr. Onions' work. It is almost a necessary condition of novel-writing, even at its best, that through it the author should establish a sympathetic communication with the reader. Fielding and Thackeray did this directly—in intimate parentheses, in confidential apologies for the characters. Scott and Dickens did it unconsciously and all the time; their pulses moved with those of their public; they had no need of explanations. Mr. Bennett does it too, more subtly, perhaps, but never—and that is essential—too subtly. This is the reason why, admirable and honest as his novels are, they are read by a large public. Now it is precisely this ability to establish sympathetic communication that Mr. Onions lacks. His knowledge of life is wide; his skill in presentation equal to it; but his temperament—because it is more original, if one likes, than Mr. Bennett's—puts an obstacle between him and the reader. His work is in some ways very like Mr. Bennett's. There is the same consuming interest in all the modes of life in the modern world; the same competence in rendering them; the same occupation with the machinery of existence, with institutions, business, furniture; and even the same tendency towards melodrama which seems to go with all these. But it is characteristic that while Mr. Bennett puts his realism in one set of novels and his melodrama in another, Mr. Onions presents them together—a combination which neither the educated nor the illiterate reader will have. He gives the impression that he is resolved to take his own road rather than the beaten track of the realistic novel; he is in some indefinable way too personal, almost opinionated. There are three suicides and one murder in his trilogy, and although they are imaginatively conceivable, and excellently handled, one feels that the book would be more convincing without them. The author may, of course, be right, and the reader wrong; it is here, at any rate, that a coldness begins to appear between them. Yet in his delineation of character Mr. Onions is even better than Mr. Bennett. Louie Causton is a more living character than Hilda Lessways, and the lesser figures, the inimitable Mr. Mackie, Weston, Merridew, Kitty Windus, could hardly be better. Mr. Onions' latest novel, "The Spite of Heaven," is not nearly so good. There are excellent scenes in it, and the pompous Italian art patron is detestably real; but everything is a little too fussily done, and the melodramatic finish is not a legitimate effect so much as a shock. Yet it would be difficult to think of more than six contemporary novelists whose work has more fundamental literary merit than Mr. Onions'.

The other book which makes one wonder on what principle reputations are apportioned is Mr. Myers's "The Clio." The author's first novel, "The Orissers," was given more enthusiastic reviews than any other volume which had appeared for years. To quote the critics, it had "a conviction and an intensity of imagination that mark it off from other novels and link it . . . with 'Moby Dick' and 'Wuthering Heights.'" It was "a work conceived and

executed on the grand scale." It was "a great book." Yet Mr. Myers's name is certainly less well known, even to the better public, than those of Mr. Waugh, for instance, and Mr. Arlen. This is quite incomprehensible. "The Clio" is a brilliant, enticing, witty, and profound work. Ostensibly it is a record of a cruise up the Amazon. Many things happen by the way, most of them fantastic; but the author succeeds brilliantly in his central task, that of presenting a party of rich, civilized, and sophisticated people against the background of nature, primitive, indifferent, and inhuman. It is obvious that the book might very easily have developed into a sermon against civilization, or against our illusions about nature, or about the transitoriness and triviality of existence. It never does so; we emerge from the story conscious that we have been given a remarkably just and complete, above all an undeviatingly intelligent, appraisal of human values. Civilization, and what must for ever underlie it, are shown in their interaction; are shown not merely with justice, but with wit; and we are left not with anything so inadequate as a point of view, pessimistic or optimistic, but with the enigma itself, the enigma which, if it is not completely satisfying, is more satisfying than anything else. Because he has a sense of values, because the intensity of his thought gives him objectivity, Mr. Myers has achieved in this story what Mr. Huxley has often attempted but never yet quite achieved: a true evocation of the disillusioned and pessimistic spirit of the age. In wit he is Mr. Huxley's equal; in intellect he is immensely his superior. There are signs of immaturity still in his style, but even his faults are full of originality; and his thought is so fascinating and profound, and has such resources behind it, that it is a continuous delight. The characters are never, perhaps, quite real, but in the world in which they move they are exquisitely characterized. They are creatures partly of the world and partly of Mr. Myers's speculation; they are figures, at any rate, in a philosophic comedy which is in the highest degree interesting.

Bernard Kellermann is described on the publisher's jacket as Germany's "outstanding novelist." He is not that; there are at least half-a-dozen novelists of quite a different significance in Germany; but "The Sea," written many years ago, remains a fascinating and vivid book. The style is too obviously reminiscent of Hamsun, whom translation has made almost a German writer, but, once one ignores this, one can enjoy Kellermann's amazingly graphic descriptions of sea life, of storms, fogs, and shipwrecks on the Breton coast. His style, which is rapid, vigorous, lyrical, carries us on with tumultuous speed. At his best he has a rapidity and force greater than Jack London's; and as a spectacle his reckless vitality is exhilarating. On the other hand he does not give us at all what Mr. Myers gives us in abundance: a criticism of life. In "The Sea" he shows us, on the one hand, the poor and hardy life of fishermen, and on the other, cosmopolitan Europe. To him the one kind of life is real, the other unreal. Obviously there can be little meaning in such terms. But the descriptions of the sea are tremendously vivid, and of its kind the book is very good. It is admirably translated.

Mr. Walpole's "Portrait of a Man with Red Hair" is disappointing. There are thrills, of course, in the black magic scenes, but was there any reason why there should be so many sentimentalities as well? Without the latter the book would be an excellent shocker. But the Cornish folk-dances, the unexpectedly luscious descriptions of scenery, the ceremoniousness of the style, impede our approach to the horrors, and the shudder comes too late.

Miss Somerville, too, seems to have made a mistake in tactics. "The Big House of Inver" is a study of development, but the method which served so well in the books Miss Somerville wrote with the late "Martin Ross" has been scarcely modified to suit the new situation. The story begins again and again, and each chapter is a separate impression rather than a continuation. Torn between the method and the theme, the reader is in continual difficulties. There are delightful passages; the horse-race is especially good; but the lack of continuity is unsettling, and gives one, moreover, a sense of verbosity. The figures which, presented once, would have been real, presented over and over become quite unconvincing. They fall to the level of stock characters.

EDWIN MUIR.

MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL is falling down !



Every day the bolts have to be tightened up and the supports examined. Frequently the patients are disturbed by workmen hammering in wedges between the floor and the struts to counteract the effects of further subsidence.

Its foundations are crumbling, its walls sinking, its ceilings cracking, its floor and beams rotting with decay. The most drastic propping and strutting only temporarily postponed complete closing down.

Your help is needed to rebuild the Middlesex.

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BRITISH DRAMA

British Drama. By ALLARDYCE NICOLL. (Harrap. 12s. 6d.)

"DRAMA continually advances to meet the needs of a particular age; and our task is, therefore, to trace at one and the same moment the relationship between the plays of one period and another, and to indicate the gradual lines of progression governing the whole world of the theatre." Professor Nicoll, having stated this intention at the beginning of his book, starts to carry it out with unflinching strictness and determination. The thread is already in his hand. He has found it in the Athenian Acropolis or thereabouts, where the Choric dances were held in honour of Dionysus, and he passes with it into the Rome of Terence and Seneca. Very important these years of inception, but, in an outline history of the development of British drama, chiefly as an influence only directly felt after the lapse of many centuries; from the fall of the Roman Empire to the rise of the English mysteries regular drama there was none; like the classical drama of Greece and Rome, the mysteries were indigenous to the soil.

It is, then, out of the Church, from the early Mass, through the Tropes, Liturgical Plays, and secularized mysteries, that we find the new thread of British drama unwinding. On and on it goes, from the Lord's Supper to "Shall We Join the Ladies?" from "Surrexit Dominus de Sepulchro" to "Fallen Angels." It has its ups and downs, now glorified, now hindered, restored, corrupted, revived; but, on the whole, it advances steadily through all vicissitudes, moving in the currents of thought through changes of need and custom, towards. . . .

But this is going too fast; we must profit by Professor Nicoll's careful example. He takes everything into account. He moves with confidence across the familiar periods of dramatic activity—the Elizabethan, the Restoration, the Augustan. The searching gaze of historians has been there before; everything is neatly sorted out and labelled; a mass of literary criticism, like the Great Pyramid, rises at one's back; one can move with assurance. So from dramatist to dramatist he goes, investigating their circumstances, their libraries, their works; sketching their generally significant plots; tracing their influence upon each other and the future—rather like a doctor noting pulses and temperatures, watching infection, taking tests of blood.

Upon the general development everything has its effect, political conditions, social conditions, the multiplication and enlargement of theatres, the elaboration of scenery, Continental thought; among the splitting, straying threads, the divisions and subdivisions of drama, the old traditions re-exerting themselves, the new needs taking colour and direction from this and that; nothing seems to escape him, and so we pass through all the various movements, the romantic, the realistic and satiric, the heroic, the pathetic, the sentimental, and so on, to and fro, all clearly traced and related, until we come to Ibsen and the modern revival. And here Professor Nicoll falters. Small wonder, indeed; there is enough to dismay the stoutest heart. He becomes vague and cautious, and sometimes a little reckless. It is all too near; one is personally involved. It is too undigested; one would like to know what posterity is going to say. He admits this himself, while hunting for the pulse of Mr. Bernard Shaw. "In analyzing this satirical strain and its gradual development, it is almost impossible for us, in Mr. Shaw's own presence and in such close proximity to those things against which he tilts, to formulate any exhaustive or final summary of his position in the history of drama and of thought. Many men have said profound or witty things about Mr. Shaw, but time only can place him in that particular position in the development of the theatre which it is his to fill."

So he leaves it to time to orientate Mr. Shaw, and returns to his analysis of the characteristics and merits of the individual dramatists; to testing and failing plays (which quite incidentally were not designated tragedies by their authors) by his standards of tragedy, and to a rather tedious summarization of plots.

But eventually he plunges. "It is hazardous to prognosticate concerning the future developments of an art, but there seem to be certain main movements in our own time which well may form the chief contributions of our age to the international art of the theatre. In the eighteen-nineties, as we have seen, realism predomi-

nated . . . but soon it was found that realism was not enough. Then came in serious drama, the union of a story of actual life with something outside the ordinary world. . . .

"This type of drama will, in all probability, form the chief development of tragedy in the succeeding years. A similar movement is visible in the sphere of comedy. . . ."

So we close the book without regret. Nothing very important, we feel, has happened to us. Professor Nicoll would have been better advised if he had never entered upon the eighteen-nineties.

CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

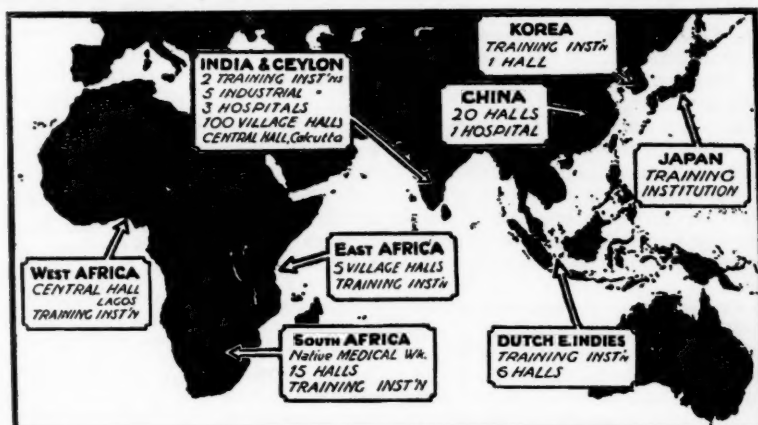
Psychology and the Church. (Macmillan. 12s. 6d.)

THIS volume, a collection of essays by nine writers, the majority of whom occupy important positions in the Church, represents an attempt to answer the serious challenge which has been made to the doctrines of Christianity by the teachings of modern psychology. Is the sense of sin nothing but displaced emotion, susceptible of properly directed therapeutic treatment? Does the attempt to subdue the lower nature merely lead to the formation of unpleasant complexes? Is God, after all, nothing but a magnified image of the parent? Such are the disconcerting suggestions made to Faith by the new science of mind. The gist of the answer which the different contributors to this compendium have combined to make to these questions is the following: Psychology, owing to its nature, can deal only with the phenomena of consciousness, and, in making any assertions regarding the reality to which these phenomena refer, is passing beyond its legitimate province; any distinguishing characteristic which attaches to the true, as opposed to the imaginary, experience of anything ultimate (e.g., of the presence of Christ) exists on a plane which is by definition inaccessible to scientific investigation.

Those who agree with this position explain the quarrel between religion and psychology as follows: The religious type is prone to certain experiences of contact with something lofty and invisible which is yet felt by the subject to be incontestably real; this sense of incontestable reality is what the psychologists call an "affect." If, as a scientist, you have not experienced this affect, you explain it as a variation of those with which you are already familiar; what else can you do? If the range of affects of which you are aware is extensive, you are likely to write about psychology intelligently, although you will almost certainly jib at conceding reality to an alleged direct experience of God. If the degree of your emotional sensitiveness is such that you cannot appreciate the difference in quality between a page of St. Teresa and the confession of some hysterical sex pervert, or if you imagine that the spiritual depth and power of the saint can be acquired effortlessly by some dexterous manipulation of the psychic apparatus, you will do no more than add to the growing pile of rubbish which goes so far to discredit modern psychology in the eyes of intelligent people.

Whether or not the psychologist is demolished by such an argument we will leave for the reader to decide. On the other hand, it is difficult to read this book without experiencing a certain irritation at the attitude adopted by the Church. Although its pages are filled with examples of the intelligent application of modern psychology to religious and ecclesiastical problems, science is apparently only appealed to when its teachings are deemed to be consonant with Christian doctrine. Thus modern scientific ideas are freely applied to such questions as those of teaching, ritual, confession, and spiritual healing, but not, for the reasons stated above, to those of conscience, prayer, the form in which the Deity is conceived. This attitude strikes one as inconsistent. If modern psychology denies the fundamental principles of Christianity, it must, from the Christian standpoint, be regarded as based on unreality, and its pronouncements on any subject, however insignificant, must consequently be deemed incomplete and inferior to those of a psychology which takes its departure from belief in the reality of God. There exist, according to Christian teaching, a natural and a spiritual understanding, and the fruits of one must ever differ from the fruits of the other. This book, interesting as it is, seems to be the result of an unsuccessful attempt to combine the two.

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LONDON

The London Perambulator. By JAMES BONE. With Pictures by MUIRHEAD BONE. (Cape. 12s. 6d.)

More London Inns and Taverns. By LEOPOLD WAGNER. (Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

The Pleasure Haunts of London. By E. BERESFORD CHANCELLOR. (Constable. 21s.)

THERE is a great deal to be said for foreign capitals. New York, Vienna, Prague or Rome—each is attractive in its own way, and deserves its own literature—within limits. But there are apparently no limits to the praise and affectionate abuse that can be bestowed on London by Londoners; and every year brings new volumes of research and rapture about this city—of regret for her past, and vain hopes for her future.

This season we have three additions, of which the first, Mr. Bone's "London Perambulator," is a leisurely, musing record of the ever-changing face of London. The book is dedicated to "the Isle of Portland, the Matrix of London's Grandeur"; for it is to the Portland Stone's weathering into every tint, from the soot-black of crannies to the ashy-white of steeples, that Mr. Bone attributes the romantic atmosphere of London. Although he discusses Londoners, Fleet Street, and shops, and knows nearly all that is worth knowing of the city's inner life, it is to her outer beauty that Mr. Bone is chiefly sensitive, and to which he draws attention. He appeals to Londoners to use their eyes; and this appeal is irresistibly backed by his brother's etchings, which are as finely pencilled and boldly shaded as London itself.

Mr. Leopold Wagner's contribution is a second book on "London Inns and Taverns," an amusing and interesting subject of which his knowledge is quite exceptional. Nor is his information strictly confined to "houses of call," for his best chapter summarizes the confusing and intriguing history of "Leicester's busy Square," and the whole book is full of incidental gossip about the taverns' patrons. But although he knows so many things, and so thoroughly, Mr. Wagner's information is sometimes hard to extract from a maze of clumsily assembled clichés.

Mr. Beresford Chancellor's "Pleasure Haunts of London" is the most serious and also the best of these three books. It is so well written, and so skilfully enriched by quotation, that to read it straight ahead is a delight and an education; yet its mass of orderly arranged facts makes it an exhaustive and manageable reference book. Finally, Mr. Chancellor's classification and history of pleasure haunts through four centuries is a valuable contribution to the psychology of pleasure and pleasure-seekers.

The entertainments of London have always fallen into certain main classes, which have varied in relative popularity from age to age, but which seem to satisfy pretty constant needs. Only one sort of spectacle has died out before the growth of humanitarian principles—that is to say, those grossly sadistic delights which comprised the whipping of blinded bears, Tyburn hangings, and Bedlam floggings. So to-day, if your thirst for blood is unsated by namby-pamby, gloved prize-fights, you can indulge your morbid taste only in the anemic horrors of screen melodrama; and you can never know the thrill of yourself publicly inflicting pain on another, as our ancestors apparently knew it when they shied brickbats at the pillory. But the normal delights of the senses are always with us; and though the fashions for indulgence may vary superficially, women and wine are ever much the same. Again, the restless searchings of the human eye have always found satisfaction in such shows as panoramas, dioramas, and the "movies"; while the few who have from time to time boasted of æsthetic and intellectual tastes have been catered for in theatres, concert-halls, and opera-houses. Curiously enough, the same people seem to find (or at least to seek) amusement in each of these different classes of delight; for there is always a pleasure-seeking element in society, whose business is to be seeing and doing whatever is to be seen and done; and who probably think less of the entertainment than of the audience. Any novelty is enough to draw together those idle persons who delight in "eating, drinking, staring, and crowding." An eighteenth century gallant, for instance, would patronize indifferently Ranelagh, David Garrick, the Whitehouse in Soho, a Bedlam flogging, and little Mozart at the Pantheon; and might even condescend to the demo-

cratic revels of Southwark Fair. And so the young man about London to-day will weary of the Embassy, and seek novelty in Luna Park; or having patronized the Phoenix Society one evening, will spend the next at the Ring. Clearly, man is a simple creature, easy to amuse, and slow to weary in the pursuit of his childish diversions!

This is an admirable book, and could be made impeccably so in its second edition by an extension of the index, and the addition of a map, or maps.

MODERN JAPANESE DRAMA

Kabuki: the Popular Stage of Japan. By ZOE KINCAID. (Macmillan. 42s.)

FROM the early seventies Japan has been alternating between a state of hypochondria and a neuropathic condition of bewilderment. When the last of the feudal barriers was broken down, the Japanese were sure that the new world opening up before them would not yield full value for what they were relinquishing. In the sight of many now living, the old was laid, none too reverently, away, and the new was grasped with both hands. The Japanese became introspective; this condition bred dissatisfaction, impatience, and acquisitiveness. A new standard was set up; judged by this, everything Japanese was somehow wrong, and everything foreign was unquestionably right.

The drama, in common with all other departments of activity, was to be measured anew and found wanting. Those Japanese who had been abroad to study the dramatic art of Western nations were officials and scholars who, on their return, regarded their own stage as an inferior product. According to them, everything was wrong; the plays were "immoral, obscene, barbarous." The gentlemen of the aristocratic classes who suddenly turned their attention to the popular stage wished to make it refined and elegant. They objected to the artificial stage voice, the imaginative costumes and make-up, the symbolic gestures: the revolving stage, the inconsistencies of the plots, the vulgarity of language, all came in for censure.

This native criticism is very near the mark. Judged by Western standards the plays are obscene and the language is certainly vulgar. It is a special dialect, indeed, of which the Japanese are very proud (and jealous); few foreigners succeed in gaining sufficient mastery of it to understand even the simplest play. They must rely on translations prepared by Japanese friends, and not infrequently the foreign student of Japanese dramatic art becomes wearied by those very inconsistencies of plot and tediousnesses of repetition of which the travelled critics complain.

Kabuki is known as the popular stage in contradistinction to the *No*, or classical drama. While Kabuki has suffered reverses from time to time, it has always enjoyed a certain measure of popularity. In April and November, indeed, the sign *man-in on-rei* (house full—many thanks) decorates all the theatres of Tokyo and other big cities. On the other hand, the *No* has never been popular; from its inception as an art in the fourteenth century it has been, for the majority of Japanese, merely an intellectual pose. Apart from a handful of native enthusiasts in Tokyo, the *No* receives honour only from abroad.

Kabuki owns no schools. Everybody, from the playwright to the humblest member of the audience, is made subservient to the actor's mood. He gags where and how he will, and often omits long sections of the original dialogue to make room for his own impromptus. But one of the secrets of the popularity of this form of the drama is that the actors frequently judge their audiences and then accommodate the play to the current mood: another, that the majority of the plays appeal strongly to the nationalist spirit and love of the heroic. So long as Kabuki flourishes, the Japanese people still feel that they have a hold on the inimitable past; beyond the doors of the theatre is another world, in which, as strangers, they live.

Many of the more common plots of Kabuki are given in this book. Although we feel that the enthusiasm of the writer and of Mr. Binyon, who has written a preface to the work, is a little overdone, the book is certainly a contribution towards a complete understanding of theatrical art. Nothing could be more delightful than the illustration of the work; the many photographs are reproduced in a manner very creditable to the publishers.

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ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

SOME notable biographical books have been published just lately. "The Fourth Earl of Carnarvon," by Sir Arthur Hardinge (Milford, three vols., 63s.), is a political biography of considerable interest. "Coleridge at Highgate," by Lucy Eleanor Watson (Longmans, 10s. 6d.), is literary. Mrs. Watson is the granddaughter of Dr. and Mrs. Gillman, with whom Coleridge lived at Highgate, and she has a good deal of interesting material at her disposal. "Madame de Pompadour," by Marcelle Tinayre, translated by Ethel Colburn Mayne (Putnam, 10s. 6d.), is historical. Then there are three modern autobiographies by more or less distinguished men: "Hearsay," by Lord Saye and Sele (Nisbet, 15s.); "Looking Back," by L. A. Atherley-Jones, K.C. (Witherby, 12s. 6d.); and "To All and Singular," by Sir Neville Wilkinson (Nisbet, 16s.). Reference should also be made to three new editions: an abridged edition of Sir Edward Cook's "The Life of Florence Nightingale" (Macmillan, 15s.); an illustrated edition of "Ariel," by André Maurois, translated by Ella D'Arcy (Bodley Head, 10s. 6d.); and "A Short Life of William Pitt," by J. Holland Rose (Bell, 4s. 6d.).

In "The Pioneer Policewoman" (Chatto & Windus, 10s. 6d.), Commandant Mary S. Allen tells the story of the Women Police Force.

Among travel books should be noted: "My Polar Flight," by Roald Amundsen (Hutchinson, 21s.); "Simen, its Heights and Abysses," by Major H. C. Maydon (Witherby, 16s.), which contains a record of travel and sport in Abyssinia; "Unknown Sweden," by James W. Barnes Steveni (Hurst & Blackett, 21s.); "A Wayfarer in Unfamiliar Japan," by Walter Weston (Methuen, 7s. 6d.); "On the Diamond Trail in British Guiana," by Gwen Richardson (Methuen, 7s. 6d.).

"A Chinese Mirror," by Florence Ayscough (Cape, 21s.), who has lived all her life in China, contains a remarkable account of the country and people, and is illustrated by drawings by Lucille Douglass.

Owing to an error the price of "Stage Lighting for 'Little' Theatres," by C. Harold Ridge (Cambridge: Heffer), was inaccurately given in these columns. The price of this book is 5s.

NOVELS IN BRIEF

It Happened in Rome. By ISABEL C. CLARKE. (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.)

Out of good ingredients Miss Clarke has made a curiously uninteresting story. Her emotional and pictorial properties ought to have combined well. She has united the riot of scent and colour in a Roman spring with affectionate, honourable, nice-minded people, some of whom have obtained, while others are deciding to obtain, all the peace and security that the Church of Rome can give. Her characters never give occasion for despair or cynicism, and the differences between her lovers are described in a style which is always well-bred and sometimes humorous, as when the mother of the hero and the mother of his fiancée hasten together to Italy on hearing of his illness. For all that, the pleasant story never grips the mind.

Simple Annals. By STACKY W. HYDE. (Noel Douglas. 7s. 6d.)

It is rather hard to forgive Nora Sheriff for bursting into "Simple Annals" as she does. Previous to her appearance it was good to read of the youth of William Bailey, to whom his mother had given the second name of "Vivian," of his boyhood in the big engineering works situated just where the salt air and romance of the Thames Estuary invade the debased country of London's outskirts. It was good to read such plain, honest writing about his wartime work in the same factory. It seemed right that he should find Nora and should complete the training in self-respect and sincerity which had been begun when another girl forgave him for some of the bragging inventions with which he had been accustomed to soothe his sense of social inferiority. Nevertheless, it seems a pity that before he met Nora we should have heard so much of her rebellion against her home life and of her seduction by an unpleasing evangelical minister. Without her errors Vivian's moral character would not have found full development, but the arrangement of the story seems almost awkward. This, however, does not affect the intelligent sympathy of Mr. Hyde's attitude to life.

Shelter. By CHARLES FIELDING MARSH. (Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

Those whose minds naturally classify books will put "Shelter" top in a second class, if not actually low in the first, and those whose vice does not happen to be classification will agree that it is a fine, sound novel. It has its moral, teaching the instability of the worldly hope men set their hearts upon. The fortune which Ezra was building up for the child whom he imagined to be his own son is taken from him, so that the fine charity and unselfishness of his earlier years may live more freely and enable him to forgive his wife for the deception, and his unencumbered spirit reassumes the sad dignity which marked him out in the opening of the story. Apart from the refreshment of an atmosphere of emotional sincerity and spacious quiet and purpose, two qualities help to prove Mr. Marsh's great ability—his restrained use of the background of level, richly coloured Norfolk dykes and reedy marshes, and his skill in suggesting a minor character from a brief incident. The treatment of Sir Crispin, the old squire, is good proof of this skill, suggesting that Mr. Marsh will produce some admirable studies of character in any book he may write in the future.

Desire. By ROY MELDRUM. (Melrose. 7s. 6d.)

"Desire" has suffered from the ambition of its writer, who might have been satisfied with a novel of half its length. Several of Mr. Meldrum's characters were clearly designed to interpret moral virtues for us, in spite of their ambiguous exterior, but the fog of words in which they are wrapped distorts all vision. In the early part of the story, influenced by the Highland background, the style is particularly affected and pretentious, and at no time does it cease to hamper the reader as it hampered its own creator. An old forgotten atmosphere, suggesting the tragic Scots stories of William Black, haunts this story of a peasant girl adopted into a "smart" group of London society to be trained as a dancer and eventually to drink herself to death.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

The Unpublished Diary and Political Sketches of Princess Lieven. Edited by HAROLD TEMPERLEY. (Cape, 12s. 6d.)


The Princess Lieven is one of the most persistent figures in all diplomatic memoirs and political biographies of the period from the Napoleonic Wars to the middle of the nineteenth century. Wife of a rather feeble Russian ambassador, she appeared to be a powerful personage behind the scenes and to have no little influence upon Russian and British statesmen. Her lovers were many, ranging from Grand Dukes to the famous Metternich. It was known that she kept a diary, but no one ever imagined that it still existed. However, a transcript of it came into the hands of Mr. Temperley, and he has now edited it in an admirable book which gives just the right amount of information and elucidation. Nevertheless, the diary is disappointing. There are interesting and amusing passages in it, but it adds little or nothing of importance to what we already knew of Princess Lieven's times. This may be due to the fact, which becomes evident from her record, that the Princess was one of those diplomatic ladies whose finger was in every pie, but who rarely, if ever, got very far below the outer crust. She never knew as much as she thought she knew, and, when she imagined herself to be pulling wires, she was usually somebody else's puppet.

The Annals of Ennius. Edited by E. M. STEUART. (Cambridge University Press. 7s. 6d.)

It is a curious fact, as Miss Steuart points out, that the fragments of Ennius have never before been edited with English notes. The number of fragments of undoubted genuineness is considerable, and some of them are of real interest and importance. Miss Steuart has produced an admirable edition. Her notes are excellent. She has divided the fragments into three classes: (1) those which are certainly genuine; (2) doubtful; (3) spurious.

The Last Secrets. By JOHN BUCHAN. **A Book of Escapes and Hurried Journeys.** By JOHN BUCHAN. **Two Dianas in Somaliland.** By AGNES HERBERT. **The Adventure of Living.** By JOHN ST. LOE STRACHEY. **Questions of the Hour.** By VISCOUNT MILNER. (Nelson. 2s. each.)

These are five pleasing volumes which have recently been added to "The Edinburgh Library." This Library contains first-class books, mostly of biography, travel, and adventure, which were originally issued at several times their present price, but are now brought within the reach of the most slender purse. They are well printed and bound.



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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

AFTER THE EMBARGO—OIL SHARES AND THE COMMODITY.

IT is well to take stock of the changed conditions in the City subsequent to the removal of the embargo on overseas loans. The City does not look for a flood of foreign issues, but there are quite a number that are in preparation. There have been three issues already—two small ones by the Melbourne Tramways and Wanganui Harbour Boards, and one of £4,628,000 by the Gold Coast Government. Loans for Western Australia and Tasmania, for two South American cities, for the City of Tokyo, are said to be in preparation, while Mr. Amery stated that £10,000,000 are to be raised for transport development in East Africa. Somewhere in the future must be expected a large stabilization loan for Belgium, possibly \$100,000,000, divided between New York and London, and another for Italy, similarly divided, as soon as the debt settlement is reached in New York by the Italian commission. Roumania, on the settlement of her debt negotiations in London, must also be regarded as a potential borrower. Then the possibility of foreign industrial issues is not to be ignored. These issues will, we think, restore harmony to the distribution of new capital raised this year which the embargo, as will be seen from the following table, had so largely upset:—

NEW CAPITAL (000's omitted)				
	Gt. Britain.	Colonies.	Foreign Countries.	Total.
1925 (ten months)	£107,533	£39,853	£18,684	£166,070
1924	89,323	73,502	60,721	223,546

What, then, will be the effects? As a first result, of course, commissions flow back to the financial houses and the City becomes a much more interesting and profitable place in which to work. (This, after all, is how London makes its living as an international money centre.) As a second result, orders flow, directly or indirectly, immediately or gradually, to our export trades for goods. The whole of the Gold Coast loan, for example, except that required to pay local labour, will be spent in this country. This has been our main reason for persistently attacking an embargo which excluded desirable foreign issues and let through undesirable colonial loans. As a third result we have to reckon the possibility of dearer money. Lastly, we must consider the effect of new issues upon existing securities, apart from the indirect effect of dearer money. Certainly existing foreign securities must feel the competition of new foreign Government loans, while foreign industrial issues of a particular class may react on British industrial issues of the same class. If underwriters are called to take up large proportions of the new issues, a considerable dampness will be felt in all markets.

It may be argued that the removal of the embargo has already had the effect of making money dearer and of depressing the gilt-edged market. Money, however, was dearer before the embargo was removed, and Mr. Churchill's announcement merely accentuated fears. The recent fall in gilt-edged stocks was the result of rather special causes. Money is now somewhat easier. The following table gives the yields on gilt-edged securities at Wednesday's prices:—

	Price Nov 11.	Flat Yield allowing for interest.	Net Yield before tax.	Net Yield after tax.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
3½% Conversion Loan (1961 or after)	75 5-16	4 13 4	4 13 4	3 14 8
4% Victory Bonds (1976) large	93	4 6 7	4 8 7	3 11 3
5% War Loan (1923-47)	100½	4 19 8	4 18 0	3 12 1
4½% Conversion Loan (1940-44)	97 5-16	4 13 9	4 16 6	3 17 7
4½% Nat. War Bonds (1927)	105 7-16	4 14 10	4 10 5	3 11 6
5% Nat. War Bonds (1927)	99½	4 0 1	—	4 1 4
5½% Treas. Bonds A & B (1929)	109 9-16	5 7 3	4 13 8	3 12 4
5½% Treas. Bonds C (1930)	102 9-16	5 7 3	4 17 6	3 16 1

We find ourselves again in disagreement with the trend of the oil share market. The professional operator talks glibly of the oil share market as being in a strong technical position, which only means that the market

has been neglected by speculators, and that there is no big bull account outstanding. In New York, oil has not shared to the same extent as, say, motors in the wild buying that has taken place. In London, rubber and tin have had their flings, and now in the speculator's opinion it is the oil share market's turn. But we see nothing in the economic condition of the oil industry to warrant a general rise in oil share prices. In places, the oil commodity markets in America are firmer. Gasoline prices strengthened in the last part of October, and largely on account of the anthracite strike the fuel oil and kerosene markets showed a decided improvement. We may even hear of a rise in the price of Pennsylvania crude oil, as refiners have been paying premiums above the posted prices. But these signs of firmer markets are not sufficient indication, in our opinion, of any real change in the basic condition of the oil industry. The daily average production has certainly been declining in the last two months, but the decline has centred largely in the heavy oil districts, and the total output is still above the danger mark of 2,000,000 barrels a day. Light oil production is likely to show an increase in the immediate future as soon as a group of wells is completed in one of the newly discovered deep sands at Oklahoma. Moreover, there are vast quantities of oil in storage, sufficient to last over 7½ months at the current rate of consumption. At this season of the year stocks generally increase. It is not Pennsylvania which decides the oil position at the present time (Pennsylvania only produces 2 per cent. of the total output of the United States), but it is California. Shipments of Californian oil, both crude and refined, continue in large volume to the Atlantic coast, where they compete with the products of the Mid-continent and Eastern areas. Yet stocks of oil in California are still increasing month by month. While this condition persists, we can see no possibility of any lasting improvement in oil prices or in the share market.

If this view be correct it would not be wise to buy Shells at the present level of the market for any great capital appreciation in the near future: nor would we rush in to buy Anglo-Persian, although its Chairman used absurdly "bullish" phrases at the general meeting on Tuesday. Sir Charles Greenway admitted that the production of the company this year would not be much greater than last, and that he did not look for any immediate rise in oil prices: yet he told shareholders to expect a more liberal participation in future profits (an interim dividend is to be paid in April or May), and he thought that an appreciation of 100 per cent. in five years on their shares was not improbable. Certain producing oil companies are perhaps rightly receiving more attention. Lago Petroleum Corporation shares (bearer) have risen from 21s. to about 30s., and as a speculative lock-up are not dear. Its production in Venezuela has reached the high level of 45,000 barrels a day, and is now even larger than that of the V.O.C. Ltd. The company is to be reconstructed, and is now a Standard Oil subsidiary for all practical purposes. That may, or may not, be a gain from the point of view of dividends. British Controlled Oilfields have shared in the upward movement, and if the rise goes further shareholders might be well advised to take part of their profits. There is no truth in the rumour that Standard Oil is taking over the concern. Mexican Eagle have also risen by about 2s. 6d. This company is in such strong financial shape that when the turn does come, the rise will be rapid. At present the only basis for the rise is a new well, producing 21,000 barrels, on Cerro Viejo property, which is owned jointly by the Mexican Eagle and Mexican Petroleum Company. If it discloses a new pool, Mexican Eagles are worth buying. If it is merely a "stripper," which it will be if it goes to salt water in a short time, there is no change in the basic position. If people want to gamble, there is nothing like an oil share.

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